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ABSTRACT

The Austin Independent School District, Texas (AISD) receives federal funds through the U. S. Department of Education's Title IV Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities (SDFSC) grant program. The purpose of the Title IV SDFSC grant is to supplement local schools' efforts to eliminate violence and the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs among students. With 1999-2000 Title IV SDFSC expenditures of more than $13 million, AISD used a multifaceted approach to the prevention and reduction of student substance use and violence. The approach included prevention and intervention efforts at each campus, and all campuses received Title IV funds based on a per pupil allocation. Programs and services were provided through campus-level activities, district-level student programs, curriculum and staff development, and support staff and services. The yearlong evaluation identified several key factors that have been instrumental in the progress AISD has made toward grant goals. These key factors include: staff teamwork; AISD partnership with community organizations; and the variety of programs directed at students. Recommendations are made for the improvement of services provided under this grant. Nine appendixes contain supplemental information about the grant, program implementation, and the evaluation process. (Contains 6 tables, 17 figures, and 48 references.) (SLD)

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TITLE IV SAFE AND DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES EVALUATION REPORT, 1999-2000

COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS IN SUPPORTING HEALTHY YOUTH

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AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
OFFICE OF PROGRAM EVALUATION
DECEMBER 2000

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

WHAT IS HAPPENING?

In our society and in education today, the safety and health of our children is a concern. Children should be able to come to school ready to learn and be able to learn in a safe environment. However, today's urban environment provides many challenges to that goal. In the Austin Independent School District (AISD), a large urban school district with over 77,000 students, student violence and substance use (e.g., tobacco, alcohol, marijuana and other drugs) exist. AISD has shown improvements in school safety for the third year in a row with decreases in student and staff assaults (in 1999-2000, total approximately 200 incidents), representing a 24% decrease. In addition, based on surveys, almost all students and staffs report feeling safe in school. However, discipline referrals for AISD student substance possession or use totaled 1,277 during 1999-2000, representing an increase of about 2%. Most of these incidents were for marijuana use. Student survey data indicated that alcohol remains the most commonly used substance as reported by students (followed by tobacco and marijuana). In addition, reported use of some substances begins as early as fourth grade and increases by grade level. This is in spite of the fact that most students acknowledge the dangers of youth substance use, and they confirm receiving such information at school. So how does a school district address these issues of substance use and safety?

HOW IS AISD ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM?

AISD receives federal funds through the U. S. Department of Education's Title IV Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities (SDFSC) grant program, a part of the Improving America's School Act of 1994. The purpose of the Title IV SDFSC grant is to supplement local schools' efforts to eliminate violence and the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs among students. The goals of the grant are to reduce student drug use, reduce student violence, increase parent and community involvement in school, and increase student involvement in school.

With 1999-2000 Title IV SDFSC expenditures of more than $1.3 million, AISD used a multi-faceted approach to the prevention and reduction of student substance use and violence. This approach included prevention and intervention efforts at district and campus levels. To comply with state law, AISD required each campus to address violence prevention in its campus improvement plan. In addition, all campuses received Title IV funds based on a per pupil allocation. Funded programs and services to AISD students, parents, and staff were provided through campus-level activities, district-level student programs, curriculum and staff development, and support staff and services.

A yearlong evaluation of the use of Title IV SDFSC funds in AISD provided a look at what is helping AISD make progress toward grant goals. At a systems level, several key factors have been instrumental in this process. One of these key factors was teamwork across AISD departments and staffs. Through the cross-functional work of staffs from campuses, curriculum, school support, grant management, and evaluation, students were served more efficiently and effectively than in the past. Another key factor has been AISD's partnering with community organizations, with local groups providing representatives to the district's SDFSC advisory

council, and with other groups providing services to campuses to enrich their SDFSC activities. The third key factor has been the variety of programs directed at students through district-level programs and through campus level activities.

For instance, through the use of mostly Title IV SDFSC funds, AISD has implemented four district-level student programs: PAL, ROPES, INVEST and Positive Families. These programs have provided AISD students with services and experiences to (a) promote healthy involvement in school and community, (b) gain essential personal skills, and (c) reduce students' vulnerability to the dangers of substance abuse and violence. At the campus level, Title IV funds have allowed each AISD campus to design its own SDFSC activities that are appropriate to the needs of the campus and the age/grade level of the students. These programs and activities have provided positive, effective outcomes, based on several important evaluation measures, which align with grant goals.

During 1999-2000, the PAL and ROPES programs worked with over 4,286 students as well as many staff members and other adults to build positive student peer mentoring relationships and student leadership skills. The PAL program (Peer Assistance and Leadership) is a student peer mentoring program that allows middle and high school students to be mentors to younger students in AISD. The ROPES program (Reality Oriented Physical Experiential Session) is a student leadership development program that provides opportunities for students to learn leadership and decision making skills and to foster cooperative group problem solving. Students who have participated in these programs over the years have lower average discipline referral rates than do all AISD students generally. Results from student and staff surveys and from focus group interviews indicate many positive personal, social and academic benefits are realized from participating in these programs. The INVEST and Positive Families programs, targeting students who have been removed to the district's Alternative Learning Center for certain offenses, worked with more than 300 students and their families in 1999-2000. Students and families that have participated in these short term interventions report improved skills in problem solving, anger management, and communication. The goals of these two programs are to return students as quickly as possible to their home campuses so that they do not lag academically, and to prevent future discipline removals. Evaluation findings indicate that over time students who complete these programs have lower average discipline referral rates than do all district students. In addition, surveys and interviews reveal that both parents and students consider the programs highly effective.

Campus level activities also have shown some success, according to campus staff members, because they have given school staff the latitude to address each school's unique goals and needs, which are delineated in the campus improvement plan. The campus component has allowed for a broad range of collaborative activities and strategies that accomplish the following:

- Campus goals/objectives are aligned with Title IV grant goals/objectives; and,
- Campus stakeholders (e.g., students, parents, staff, community) participate in planning, implementing and/or evaluating strategies for a safe and drug free campus.

Some examples of campus-based activities funded through Title IV during 1999-2000 include support of a middle school junior police academy, purchase of supplemental curriculum materials, prevention-focused speakers or presentations at schoolwide assemblies, student support groups, staff professional development, student prevention program participation, peer mediation, and community service or collaboration. As a result, most campuses have reported

benefits consistent with the goals of the Title IV grant: reduced number of student discipline referrals; increased school participation by students, parents, staff and community members; and increased knowledge and skills in areas such as responsible decision making, understanding the dangers of drugs, and practicing peaceful alternatives to violence.

These campus level efforts have been supported by district curriculum initiatives in the areas of health and of guidance and counseling. Staff training and the provision of supplemental curriculum resources have been critical to reaching the Title IV goals. Thus, coordination and teamwork among school support and other district staff members have directly contributed to AISD's progress toward reducing violence and drug use, and increasing student, parent and community involvement in school.

A challenge that faced AISD in 2000 was the overall 37% reduction in the allocation of Title IV funds from 1999-2000 to 2000-01. A number of program and staffing decisions had to be made. The district decided to maintain the multi-component approach to providing Title IV programs and services at both district and campus levels. However, the level of activities, services and staffing had to be reduced from prior years in order to maintain the core elements of Title IV prevention in AISD. Both district-level programs (PAL, ROPES, INVEST, Positive Families) and campus-level activities were maintained but at reduced support. Funding for some central support staff members and services was either cut completely or reduced (e.g., management, evaluation, school support, advisory council). The challenge for AISD will be to reexamine its current Title IV SDFSC program, weigh the importance and impact of the grant-funded programs and services, and decide how these fit with district goals and objectives.

Recommendations for AISD Title IV SDFSC Grant

Although progress has been made, there is room for improvement when it comes to AISD youth drug/violence prevention and intervention. This is an issue of immediate concern since federal Title IV allocations going automatically to school districts are declining as more of these funds are being directed toward national grant competitions. Further uncertainty results from reauthorization of Title IV with other educational legislation that has yet to be finalized at the federal level. With fewer resources, AISD and other school districts are being forced to cut back programs, staff, and other services supported by the grant and look elsewhere to try and fill the gap.

How does AISD make such choices about prevention of youth drug use and violence? As has been shown in research and in societal trends, a one-time or short-term effort at drug/violence prevention is not effective in making any long-term impact on youth drug use and violence. Therefore, the message that drug use and violence are wrong and harmful must be delivered continuously and consistently from all sectors of society, including the schools, as well as from the family, the community and its organizations, government, and the media. A balance of prevention, intervention, and enforcement must be present and coordinated for optimal impact.

AISD must continue to use the federal guidelines, Principles of Effectiveness (1998) to improve its prevention programs and activities. Briefly, these Principles are to:

- Conduct needs assessments to define needs and resources;
- Establish measurable goals and objectives in a collaborative atmosphere;
- Seek out research-based, effective strategies, programs, and activities; and,

- Conduct on-going evaluation and benchmarking to assess progress toward goals and to improve or eliminate programs that are not effective.

With these Principles in mind, and given substantial reductions in AISD's Title IV funds, specific recommendations are offered for consideration. There are several systemic, district-level areas that can be addressed for improvement. First, AISD's drug prevention plan (adopted in 1992) must be updated and adopted as part of the district's improvement plan. There has been improvement in AISD's prevention of violence over the past few years, with reductions in student discipline referrals for assaults, and with the requirement to include violence prevention in district and campus improvement plans. However, student drug use remains a significant problem, and youth drug prevention needs to become central to the district's educational goals.

A related districtwide recommendation is to raise awareness of the extent of youth substance use and violence in AISD and in the community. Evaluation data indicate that AISD staff, students, and parents are in need of prevention information on a variety of topics surrounding youth substance use and violence. This can be accomplished through several readily available means: training (e.g., professional staff development, campus-level meetings, public workshops), continuous monitoring and evaluation, and communication (e.g., reporting, use of media). AISD and other Texas school districts are required by law to monitor and report the extent of youth substance use and violence on an annual basis. This information should be made more widely available to AISD stakeholders and the community for their planning and decision making.

AISD and the community must continue to support drug and violence prevention programs with strategic combinations of funding and other resources. As federal and local dollars going to school districts vary from year to year, AISD decisions about how to support prevention of youth substance use and violence will need to be tied to programs and strategies that are working effectively, and will hinge on whether AISD decision makers view the prevention of youth drug use and violence as central to the academic success of the children served. Grant-funded and locally-funded initiatives that have common goals are examples of where combinations of resources can benefit all AISD students, families, and staff. For instance, Title I and Title IV both seek to improve parental involvement in schools, and programs and activities to promote this goal can be accomplished using both fund sources. Some community resources, such as social service agencies, are connected already with certain campuses in providing support for prevention activities. These relationships must be encouraged since community resources are often the only way that some campuses can provide drug and violence prevention services to all of their students.

Districtwide, core curriculum initiatives in science, health, and guidance and counseling should have a common, required set of youth drug and violence prevention materials to use in all grade levels. At this time, AISD has a variety of prevention resources from which staff have the ability to supplement their core curriculum materials and instructional methods. If AISD adopts and mandates a single drug and violence prevention curriculum, clearer direction can be taken in providing professional development, student instruction and provision of materials to schools. Program coordination will be enhanced as well, both within the Title IV program, and in all other grant- or locally-funded programs because there will be a common curriculum base to work from.

Improvements are needed districtwide in AISD's financial procedures. Campus survey respondents indicated that the most common difficulty in implementing Title IV-funded activities

was the complexity, paperwork and delays associated with accessing and using grant funds. Due to the short time that grant funds are available to be used during a school year, it is critical that AISD financial procedures be altered. If financial procedures could be simplified for easier understanding, and streamlined to enable swifter processing, then accessing, monitoring, using, and evaluating use of funds would be more efficient and less complicated.

The PAL peer mentoring program, which has been in AISD for many years, can benefit from improvements such as having the program supported through multiple funding sources, both internal and external to AISD. Since high school and middle school students participating in PAL receive academic course credit for being in the program, PAL should have its basic support from campuses that offer it and from local budget. However, due to its community involvement component, other external funding sources should be sought. Currently, there are external grant efforts to expand PAL in AISD and statewide. The only Title IV funding allocated for PAL in 2000-01 is for a consultant to provide program coordination. Although PAL students tend to have lower rates of discipline than students districtwide, district decision makers will have to consider the relative value of the program to the district as an elective course for secondary students, its benefits as a prevention program, and whether it needs district-level coordination.

The ROPES program, also in AISD for many years, has been in constant demand from campus staff and students, and ROPES student participants have shown lower discipline rates than the district as a whole. With the program's emphasis on leadership development and group problem solving, the limited number of staff currently operating the program, and the majority of the program funding originating from Title IV funds, the district also will have to consider the value of this program in the district's overall prevention and academic goals. A past program project was to train campus staff as auxiliary ROPES facilitators in order to build program capacity and serve more students. With budget cuts, this project also was cut. If possible, the program should be expanded to bring in those campus staff members that were trained and use their unique skills to provide ROPES to more students. Another option may be to make some reallocations among staff currently funded through Title IV (perhaps with a combination of grant and local funding) so that an additional certified ROPES facilitator can be utilized to provide more ROPES classes.

INVEST and Positive Families, both offered at the district's Alternative Learning Center, have been Title IV intervention efforts to help return students to their schools after only a short discipline removal. In addition, according to students and family members, these programs have provided great benefits in providing improved communication and problem solving skills. However, Positive Families has suffered from low enrollment and completion rates since its inception. The main reason for this is the lack of policy to make this program mandatory; it has not been required to be offered as a removal option at student disciplinary hearings, and it has not been required that a student complete the program prior to a return to campus. INVEST has not had these problems because there is policy to make this program mandatory. Unless Positive Families can be made mandatory, some options should be considered to improve efficiency:

- combine the Positive Families curriculum with the INVEST curriculum and offer them simultaneously; or
- incorporate components of Positive Families into the existing Alternative Learning Center's behavioral skills classes and curriculum.

Campuses also can benefit from changes to AISD's Title IV program in spite of dwindling Title IV resources. Campuses should be given more guidance in their selection of ways to spend Title IV allocations appropriately according to grant regulations. Following Principles of Effectiveness, campuses should be given a menu of specific research based programs, activities and materials that have been associated with the reduction or prevention of youth substance use and violence. The choices campuses are given can include district-level prevention programs, initiatives and materials. Other options to consider in improving campus-level Title IV activities include:

- encouraging vertical team campuses to pool their Title IV funds in order to serve more students on a more economical scale;
- combining multiple funding sources to support common goals, such as parent involvement; and,
- continuing to encourage campuses to seek community collaborations with individuals and organizations that can provide prevention education resources.

Improvements can be made in AISD Title IV program evaluation. Program evaluation is an ever-evolving process in which continual, participatory learning brings about new ways to improve the methods used to evaluate programs as well as suggestions for improving the programs being evaluated. Therefore, the evaluation of Title IV programs can benefit from the addition of more pre-program/activity measurements to the existing post-program measurements so that progress can be assessed more accurately. In addition, Title IV evaluation can benefit by extending assessment to include other district stakeholders, such as parents and community members. This can be accomplished by combining data collection methods among other evaluation and assessment efforts being conducted in the district. Another recommendation is to continue receiving district support to monitor and evaluate district indicators (e.g., discipline, attendance, academic measures) that are key to Title IV. This support will need to come in the form of a continuing district mandate to show accountability for improvements in the safety and health of AISD youth. This may be realized if campuses and the district are required to examine progress toward reducing student drug use and violence in the improvement plans. The district's evaluation staff can be called upon to provide technical assistance to campus staff and other district staff on such topics as measurement, data interpretation, and incorporating data into planning.

PREFACE

"What Works"

What works in AISD for the prevention of substance use and violence in schools? While this is not an easy question to answer, a thorough evaluation of the use of Title IV funds allocated to AISD for 1999-2000 has given insight into what is effective in supporting students to make good decisions. This report highlights examples of Title IV district initiatives that seem to have positive impact on students, families and staff. This approach reveals different perspectives on current programs and curriculum that staff, students, and parents feel are effective ways of developing protective factors for our students.

How to Use This Report

Quite often, as program evaluators, we are asked "so what?" "What do these numbers mean?" "Do the recommendations get implemented?" These are great questions for us and for you as the reader to explore. Our philosophy in approaching program evaluation is first that it must be useful. That is, evaluators provide decision makers with the data and information that they need to make the best decisions about how to achieve safe and drug free AISD schools. This effort is no easy accomplishment today, given the trends of student substance use and violence. At the core of what we do is a constant consideration for the consumers of this report and the data contained within. We recommend that you use this report to help you gain perspective on current grant allocations, program structure, and accomplishments.

For Decision Makers: A thorough reading of this report will allow you to understand the history of the grant, as well as what seems to be working and what recommendations have been made for change.

For Educators: Chapter 5 will provide a description of campus initiatives, while Chapter 6 will give you a glance at the curriculum available in the district to support students in healthy decision making.

For Program Staff: Chapters 4-7 will guide you through a comprehensive look at where funds are allocated, and what specific initiatives are being implemented with the grant to support programs to prevent substance use and violence.

For Community Agency Staff: Chapter 8 will give you an overview of some of the collaborations between Title IV initiates and the community.

For Other Readers: This report has a wealth of information about AISD's initiatives to combat substance abuse and violence in schools.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY i

Overview i
Recommendations for AISD Title IV SDFSC Grant iii

PREFACE vii

"What Works" vii
How to Use This Report vii
Acknowledgements viii

TABLE OF CONTENTS ix

LIST OF TABLES xi

LIST OF FIGURES xii

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION 1

Overview of the Title IV SDFSC Grant 1
AISD Title IV Grant Evaluation 3
Title IV & AISD Evaluation Philosophy 4

CHAPTER 2: DRUG AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION 5

Approaches to Understanding Healthy Youth 5
SDFSC: A National & Local Perspective 9

CHAPTER 3: FRAMING THE PROBLEM 13

Introduction: Methods & Data Sources 13
Substance Use in AISD 13
Violence in AISD 22

CHAPTER 4: AT A GLANCE: AISD TITLE IV STUDENT PROGRAMS 25

Introduction to "At a Glance" Chapters 4-8 25
At a Glance: ROPES: Reality Oriented Physical Experiential Session 27
At a Glance: PAL: Peer Assistance and Leadership 35
At a Glance: SUPER I - INVEST and Positive Families 39

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL-LEVEL TITLE IV CAMPUS INITIATIVES 43

Introduction 43
Campus Evaluation 43

CHAPTER 6: AISD TITLE IV CURRICULUM AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT 53

Overview 53
Science and Health Curriculum 53
Guidance and Counseling Curriculum 56

CHAPTER 7: AISD TITLE IV SUPPORT STAFF AND SERVICES 57

At a Glance: Team Approach 57
Grant Manager and Budget Specialist 58
Evaluators 58
School Support and Community Specialists 59
Instructional Coordinators 59
Campus based Drug Counselors 59

CHAPTER 8: DISTRICT & COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS 63

SDFSC Advisory Council 63

Coordination of Title IV, Title I, and Other Grant Programs 63
Middle School Coordinators Grant 64
Other Collaborations Within AISD 65
Community Agencies 65

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSIONS 69

CHAPTER 10: RECOMMENDATIONS 73

APPENDICES 79

Appendix A: Federal Guidelines for Use of Title IV SDFSC Funds 80
Appendix B: Safe & Drug Free Schools & Communities Act Principles of Effectiveness 85
Appendix C: SDFSC Planning and Evaluation Forms 86
Appendix D: AISD Alcohol & Drug Abuse Education and Prevention Plan 89
Appendix E: Recommendations From the AISD Administrative Task Force on School Safety 92
Appendix F: Chapter 3 Data 94
Appendix G: ROPES Evaluation 111
Appendix H: PAL Evaluation 118
Appendix I: SUPER I- INVEST & Positive Families Evaluation 126

REFERENCES 130

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	AISD Students' Perceptions of the Danger of Substance Use, 2000	18
Table 2	AISD Secondary Students' Reported Substance Use by Reported Typical Grades Received	19
Table 3	Elementary Student Respondents - Sources of Drug/Alcohol Information	21
Table 4	Secondary Student Respondents - Sources of Drug/Alcohol Information	21
Table 5	Secondary Student Respondents – Use of Help Sources	21
Table 6	District level Title IV Supported Staff Training by Curriculum Area, 1999-2000	53

LIST OF FIGURES

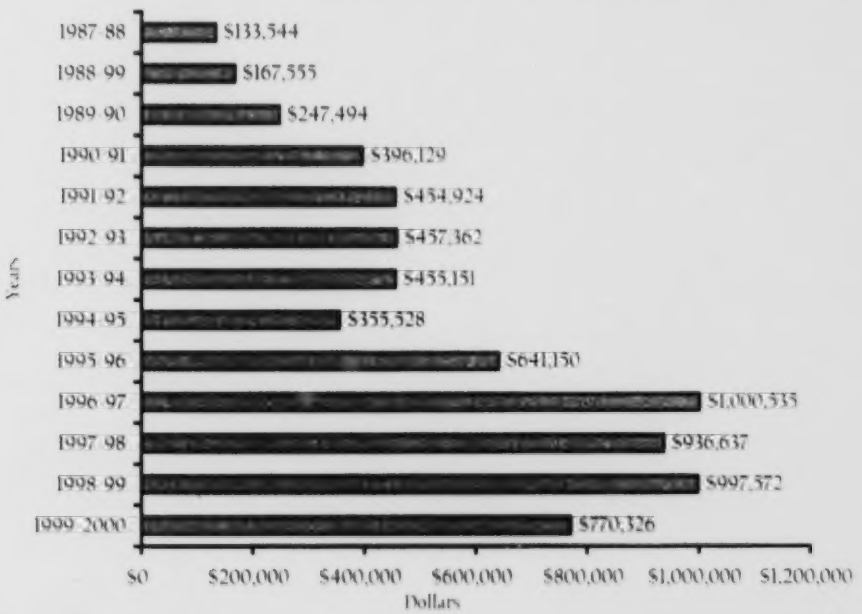
Figure 1	Title IV SDFSC Grant Monies Received by AISD, 1987-88 to 1999-2000	1
Figure 2	The "Donut" Approach to Understanding Influences on Adolescent Development	6
Figure 3	Title IV Program Funding Emphasis by Allocation, 1994-95 to 1999-2000	11
Figure 4	Student Discipline Referrals for Substance Use or Possession in AISD, 1995 to 2000	13
Figure 5	Percentage of AISD Elementary Students Recent (Past Year) Substance Use, 2000	14
Figure 6	Percentage of AISD Elementary Students Reporting Ever Used Substances, 2000	15
Figure 7	Percentage of AISD Secondary Students Reporting Recent (Past Month) Substance Use, 2000	15
Figure 8	Percentage of AISD Secondary Students Reporting Having Ever Used Substances, 2000	16
Figure 9	AISD vs. Texas on Reported Lifetime Usage, 2000	16
Figure 10	AISD vs. Texas on Students Reported Recent (Past Year) Substance Usage, 2000	17
Figure 11	Percentage of Secondary Students Reporting Recent Substance Use, AISD 2000 vs. YRBS 1999	17
Figure 12	Percentage of Secondary Students Reporting Ever Used Substances, AISD 2000 vs. YRBS 1999	18
Figure 13	Assault Discipline Referrals in AISD, 1995-96 to 1999-2000	22
Figure 14	Weapons Possession in AISD, 1995-96 to 1999-2000	22
Figure 15	1999-2000 AISD Title IV Allocations Per Grant Component	25
Figure 16	How it Works: Activity During ROPES Course	31
Figure 17	1999-2000 Title IV Campus Expenditures by Category	44

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW OF THE TITLE IV SAFE & DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS & COMMUNITIES GRANT

The Austin Independent School District (AISD) has received federal funding through the Title IV Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities (SDFSC) grant since the 1987-88 school year. Originating from the Drug-Free Schools Act of 1986 (Public Law 99-570) and subsequent legislative amendments, the purpose of the SDFSC grant is to supplement state and local educational organizations' efforts toward education on and prevention of drug abuse and violence. Usually, the grant funds are funneled from the U. S. Department of Education through state education agencies (e.g., the Texas Education Agency) to school districts and other entities at the local level. The historical levels of federal assistance to the district, defined as basic allocation awarded annually plus any supplemental funding (not including funds carried over from the previous year), are reflected in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Title IV SDFSC Grant Monies Received by AISD, 1987-88 to 1999-2000



Source: AISD SDFSC Program Records

For 1999-2000, AISD received a basic formula allocation of $361,826 in Title IV SDFSC funds. In addition, AISD received a supplemental award of $408,500 as a result of special competitive funding provided by the Texas Education Agency to the top 10% of school districts in Texas that demonstrated the greatest need in terms of the SDFSC grant application and evaluation. This was the fifth year that supplemental funds were awarded to AISD. SDFSC funds are intended to supplement, but not supplant, district resources devoted to promoting a safe and drug-free learning environment. These funds supported an array of district and campus programs and strategies aimed at prevention and intervention. These programs and strategies are described in subsequent chapters of this report.

The Drug-Free Schools Act of 1986, amended in 1992 and again in 1994 (renamed the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act), sets forth guidelines on the types of programs appropriate for funding. Appendix A contains the full description of these guidelines and the types of approved programs for the grant. The most recent congressional addition to the grant has been the adoption of the U. S. Department of Education's Principles of Effectiveness in 1998. Appendix B includes the text of the principles. The goal of these four Principles is to improve the accountability for use of Title IV funds among all grant recipients. The Principles stress the importance of using needs assessment, measurable goals and objectives, research-based programs and strategies, and periodic program evaluation. Both federal and state education agencies intend that the Principles guide future Title IV funding, especially with the imminent reauthorization of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in the U. S. Congress.

In AISD, the Principles have guided the use of all Title IV funds at both district and campus levels. Early in the fall semester, every campus contact and every district Title IV program manager completed a plan for the 1999-2000 school year that outlined how their Title IV funded activities would align with the goals of the Title IV grant and with the Principles of Effectiveness. Use of funds was monitored throughout the year, and a year-end evaluation was conducted for all program and campus expenditures (see Appendix C for planning and evaluation forms).

During 1999-2000, the AISD SDFSC program continued toward development and improvement of a comprehensive approach to serving students, parents and staff members. Close alignment was fostered between grant-funded activities and selected curriculum area efforts made in science/health and guidance/counseling. For instance, curriculum material improvements and staff training were provided to the district's health curriculum, Making Healthy Choices (1991, 1995), and to the district's guidance and counseling curriculum, Live This! (1998), with special consideration to the state-recommended drug and violence prevention curriculum, Texas Prevention Curriculum Guide: Drug and Violence Education (DAVE) (1997).

In 1999-2000, Title IV funds supported districtwide student programs as well as campus-based activities. AISD's district-level Title IV programs, including PAL, ROPES, INVEST (formerly SUPER 1), and Positive Families, continued to make improvements in their program implementation. In particular, the ROPES and PAL programs made efforts to extend accessibility and services to more students, families, and staff members in the district. The campuses were given a larger portion of the grant funds during 1999-2000 than in past years for their Title IV initiatives, with a per-student allocation of $4.00 going toward campus activities. By law, the private schools and neglected or delinquent facilities within the AISD boundaries also received the opportunity to participate in the Title IV grant. These schools were allocated funds based on the same per-pupil allocation. Campuses were able to design their own Title IV programs and activities, appropriate to the needs of their students, families, and staff members. Campuses were assisted by district staff members in the planning, implementation and evaluation of their activities funded through the grant. This partnering process led to the more successful completion of Title IV campus activities and efficient use of funds, and to a better alignment of campus needs and activities with the goals of the Title IV grant.

The AISD SDFSC District Advisory Council continued to provide direction and guidance to the program. The Council helped clarify needs, goals, and objectives of the grant by bringing their members' knowledge and experience relevant to prevention education. Topics addressed by this group included funding, comprehensive program planning, review of results from district

surveys and program evaluation, and prioritization of program goals and objectives. In addition, the group provided a venue in which individuals from the district and the Austin – Travis County community could share ideas and raise awareness of their respective activities as they pertain to AISD and mutual efforts to promote a safe and drug-free community.

AISD Title IV Grant Evaluation

In compliance with the federal SDFSC legislation, state law, and district mandates, the AISD Title IV SDFSC program is evaluated by staff in the Office of Program Evaluation within the district's Division of Accountability and Information Systems. Evaluation is yearlong and the activities conducted are in line with federal, state and local reporting requirements. Evaluation activities include district and campus program evaluation planning, data collection, data analysis, report writing, and communication of results. Information is gathered on the extent of current drug (i.e., tobacco, alcohol, marijuana and other illegal drugs) and violence problems in the schools. In addition, all Title IV funded programs and activities are evaluated for their progress in the prevention or intervention of student drug use or violence.

Besides meeting the reporting requirements, evaluation of the district's Title IV grant program is conducted for the purpose of program improvement using a participatory process that encourages the involvement of all district stakeholders, including students, parents and staff. This participatory evaluation has several benefits:

- Collaboration: Participants (both staff and students) can network and share leadership, decision-making, and organizational coalitions which enhance the effectiveness of the programs.
- Commitments: Greater efforts towards program evaluation and implementation foster program improvement and perceived control, resulting in proactive behaviors that benefit program recipients.
- Intellectual Excitement: Through challenging ourselves collectively and building a common evaluation language, conceptual strength adds to program effectiveness.
- Investment & Energy: Participation in the process leads to synergy and a sense of community-level empowerment.

Participatory evaluation is a multifaceted method of engaging stakeholders in the process of understanding program effectiveness, and developing measurable outcomes that reflect valued program accomplishments. The key ingredients of participatory evaluation are the collaborative efforts of defining the evaluation questions and understanding how the participants' knowledge, skills, or attitudes, and behaviors were affected. Participatory evaluation goes beyond the standard model in which the evaluator governs the decisions about evaluation methodologies and criteria for judging results. As evaluators in this process, we serve program staff, students and administrators by focusing their questions to obtain measurable results, and by developing a relational experience in evaluation.

Evaluation information is gathered through methods appropriate to the program strategy or activity being assessed. For instance, surveys of students, staff, and parents are used to gather self-reported information on knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. The survey data are useful for gauging the extent of the perceived problems of substance use and violence in the schools and can support important insights about the impact of programs on participants. Interviews and focus groups are also used to collect valuable, qualitative information from program participants.

Examining critical variables in district student databases (e.g., attendance, discipline, academic achievement, demographics) is another important way to gauge program impact. Finally, with respect to fiscal accountability, the district's Title IV SDFSC program allocations and expenditures records are reviewed.

TITLE IV & AISD EVALUATION PHILOSOPHY

AISD Office of Program Evaluation has developed and implemented program evaluations for a variety of federally and locally funded programs and initiatives for over 20 years. The trends in program evaluation have been widely divergent over time, and today, we represent a group of researchers dedicated to both formative and summative evaluations, incorporating qualitative and quantitative means to develop pictures of program effectiveness. Program effectiveness has many different hues, depending on one's vantage point. Effectiveness can mean efficiency, cost effectiveness, benefits realized by participants, or some combination of the above (Green, 1994). We strive to provide a thorough picture of programs, realizing that program evaluation has political inherency. Beliefs often shape the contours of our decisions, and as such, we must state underlying assumptions and beliefs to develop sound methodology.

In evaluating the Title IV grant, we have adopted a participatory model of evaluation, which is grounded in critical theory that promotes empowerment and social change as an ideological framework to encourage stakeholder engagement in program improvement. This philosophy most notably contextualizes the program for the participant and practitioners. The evaluation audience develops insight into program improvement and ownership into the process of change. Often associated with the Total Quality Improvement Model, this methodology seeks action learning as a means of instituting systematic improvement. As evaluators, we build trust and a common language, allowing a forum for fact-based decision making to overcome barriers that disempower people (and program participants). Taking the fear out of measurement and creating leaders among staff, administration and students has proved to be an effective way of approaching program evaluation (Yesso, 2000). This process, complementary to the program, develops better programs, and a sound understanding of accountability to the ultimate target of these programs, the students.

CHAPTER 2: DRUG AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION

APPROACHES TO UNDERSTANDING HEALTHY YOUTH

RESEARCH ON RISK & PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Frameworks in the field of drug and violence prevention have been evolving over time. Recent descriptive theories and research studies have focused on the importance of "risk factors" as predictors of substance use or abuse[1], violence and related problems in adolescence or young adulthood. Researchers have found that the more the risks in a child's life can be reduced, the less vulnerability that child will have to subsequent health and social problems (Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller, 1992).

Practitioners, decision makers and adults must note that exposure to even a number of significant risk factors in a child's life does not necessarily mean that substance abuse or other problems will inevitably follow. Many children growing up in presumably high-risk families and environments emerge relatively free of problems. The reason for this, according to many researchers, is the presence of "protective factors." Protective factors balance and buffer risk factors (Hawkins et al., 1992). Taken together, these research findings enhance our understanding of how and why youth initiate substance use as well as provide some direction for preventing, decreasing or eliminating use.

Risk and protective factors exist at every level at which individuals interact with society. The individual brings certain qualities or characteristics to each interaction, which in turn set the tone of these interactions - positive or negative. One way to organize these factors is by the domains in a person's life. These domains (and factors that contribute to each) are listed below (Brounstein, Zweig, & Gardner, 1998):

- Individual (biological, and psychological dispositions, attitudes, values, knowledge, skills, problem behaviors);
- Peer (norms, activities);
- Family (function, management, bonding);
- School (bonding, climate, policy, performance);
- Community (bonding, norms, resources, awareness/mobilization);
- Society/environmental (norms, policy/sanctions).

These domains cannot be viewed as static. They all affect the individual at different levels at different times, and are affected by an individual's perceptions and interactions with others. When understanding programs that are targeted at the prevention of substance use and violence, it is essential to understand that risk and protective factors influence individual participants. Programs may target the risk and protective factors more overtly in the program's objectives and activities, with the intention of indirectly impacting student's knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors in relation to substance use and violence.

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[1] In this report, substance use implies occasional, short-term or one-time use of tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs. Substance abuse implies continual, long-term, or excessive use of such substances.

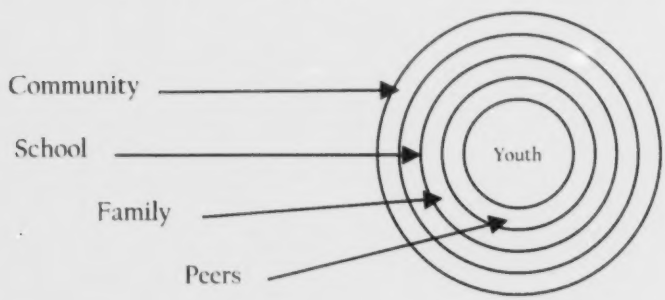
DRUG ABUSE & VIOLENCE PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Over time, punitive means of dealing with drugs and violence have been only minimally successful. Research and experience have shown that efforts in prevention must be established as a means of reducing drug abuse and violence. The Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP), has undertaken the effort to formalize, synthesize, and extract lessons based on hard scientific evidence regarding the ability of intervention programs to successfully decrease substance use among its target populations (CSAP, 1999). In a recent analysis of programs by CSAP, six prevention strategies have been identified that can guide programs focusing on risk and protective factors for substance use. These six basic strategies, developed as a means of focusing funding initiatives, have guided model prevention programs, including strategies used in AISD. In well-implemented, focused programs, these strategies attempt to increase resiliency to substance use in the following ways:

- Information Dissemination- increasing students' knowledge, and altering attitudes toward drug use and abuse;
- Prevention Education- teaching critical life and social skills (e.g. decision making skills, refusal skills, cultural pride);
- Alternative Drug-Free Activities- meeting developmental needs of youth who participate in drug-free activities;
- Problem Identification and Referral- recognizing youth who have already initially tried drugs or developed substance abuse problems and providing appropriate treatment programs;
- Community Based Interventions- enhancing community research and involvement in substance use prevention;
- Environmental Approach- incorporating policy changes, standards, and attitudes that influence systemic as well as individual problems related to substance use.

Past research has demonstrated that adolescent drug use is greater in communities where use is condoned (Coate & Grossman, 1985), in schools where use is high (Baumrind, 1985), and in families where use is accepted (Kumpfer, 1987). Thus, program development must consider the students' domains of support: individual, family, peer, school, community, and social influences. Pittman (1991) offers such an approach to working with youth that increases their opportunities and available resources as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: The "Donut" Approach to Understanding Influences on Adolescent Development



Source: Pittman (1991)

CURRENT APPROACH TO YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

There are approximately 19,000,000 adolescents, ages ten through fourteen, in the US (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, CCAD, 1996). AISD serves more than 17,000 students in this age group. Therefore, amidst profound social change and economic transformations in the 20th century, supporting youth to grow up healthy and well educated is critical.

The CSAP program delivery strategies can be used to deliver key competencies supporting youth development. AISD's approach to student support through Title IV funds reflects a paradigm of integration and multiple domain support. Developing competencies for success can be summarized in four youth development criteria shown below (Epstein, 1988):

- Health/physical competence: good current health and evidence of appropriate knowledge, attitudes and behaviors that will ensure future health (e.g. exercise, good diet/nutrition, etc.).
- Personal/social competence: intrapersonal skills (understand personal emotions, have self-discipline); interpersonal skills (work with others, develop friendships and relationships through communication, cooperation, empathizing, negotiating); coping/system skills (adapt, be flexible, assume responsibility); judgment skills (plan, evaluate, make decisions, solve problems).
- Cognitive/creative competence: broad base of knowledge; appreciation of and participation in creative expression; good oral, written language skills; problem solving and analytical skills; interest in learning and achieving.
- Citizenship (ethic and participation): understanding the history and values of one's nation and community; desire to be involved in efforts that contribute to the nation and community.

These four competencies cut across Pittman's (1991) domains of individual, peer, family, school, and community influences on youth. A comprehensive approach to drug and violence prevention must address all of these competencies. That is, while targeted or categorical intervention and prevention strategies are attractive because of the ease of implementation, they often do not take into account two findings from research: that more than one problem behavior is likely to occur in the same individual; and, that these problems are likely to have common roots in childhood and educational experience (CCAD, 1996). For example, violence and aggression are associated with multiple problem behaviors including substance abuse (e.g., Huizinga, Loeber, & Thornberry, 1994). These must be dealt with directly, facing the underlying factors that predispose adolescents to engage in high-risk problem behaviors.

YOUTH IN SOCIETY

Understanding youth development and maturity goes beyond psychological and personal skills and competencies. One must consider the social and environmental factors that influence youth behaviors. It is often difficult to understand the reasons why some youth become violent or use drugs. Researchers often cite the social transformations in American society as one perspective from which to understand youth behavior. CCAD (1996) points to trends in recent decades that have had strong effects on adolescent development:

- The Changing Family: More youth today are spending time alone in front of the computer or TV and in age-segregated peer groups. With one or more parents in the workplace, adolescent youth spend less time than ever in the company of a

caring adult. Neighborhood and kinship networks have eroded, and divorce has become common.

- The Shifting Nature of Work: As the emerging global marketplace causes changes in the level of job skills required, many youth may find that a high school education is not enough. The growing differences among college- and high school-educated youth and students who drop out before completing high school leaves many with a bleak sense of the future.
- The Gap Between Early Reproductive Capacity and Adult Roles: Young people today are undergoing pubertal changes an average of two years earlier than they did a century ago, yet marriage and other hallmarks of adult status are occurring later. This leads to anxiety felt by both young people and their parents.
- Dominance of the Media: Television, videos, computers, and the Internet have all pervaded the lives of today's youth. According to CCAD, by mid-adolescence, when television viewing peaks, young people will have spent more time in front of the television than with their teachers. Television profoundly influences adolescents' fears and expectations about the future, their values, and their relationships with others.
- Diversity in the Population: The prevalence of multi-ethnicities in modern society contributes to different ways of living and dealing with unknowns. Living peacefully and respecting "the different" is a major task for young people in the 21st century.

Social transformations have affected adolescents and their families; no segment of the population has been immune to these changes. Particularly troubling are some worsening trends for younger adolescents. For example, today, children ages ten through fourteen are commonly exhibiting many of the very risky behaviors that were once associated with late adolescence. This can result in loss of opportunity, disability and even death (CCAD, 1996).

With recent publicized violent school shootings, more attention has been paid to finding out why school violence occurs. Some recent research efforts may point to potential predictors of student violence. For instance, Ellickson and McGuigan (2000) report the findings from a five-year study of 4,300 youth, in which analysis of student surveys showed that several factors were predictive of later violence. These factors included deviant behavior in grade seven, poor academic grades, weak bonds with one's middle school, early drug use, and peer drug use. A separate report by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (2000) on school shooting incidents provides recommendations for further research and school violence prevention efforts. The FBI report identifies four common categories of risk factors that must be examined: personality traits, family situations, school interaction, and social interaction. These are identical to the student domains identified earlier by Pittman (1991). Among the risk factors that have been associated with school shooters are poor coping skills, access to weapons, signs of depression, drug and alcohol abuse, alienation, narcissism, inappropriate humor, unlimited television/internet use, and clear expression of threats. Yet, the report claims that there is no "profile" per se of a student shooter, and that the report findings should only be used as a general guide for schools when making a school safety plan.

SDFSC: A National and Local Perspective

National Perspective: Policy Initiatives in Dealing With Violence and Drugs Among Youth

In the decades between 1960 and 2000, great shifts in youth policy and practice took place. These shifts altered the definition of young people's responsibilities, rights, competencies, and needs, as well as those of their families, institutions, and communities (Pittman, 2000). Changes are evident when examining youth issues; "deficits" language has been softened by the concept of "assets." Youth, family and community now more than ever are aware that the well being of their respective populations rests in collaborative efforts. With each decade, we have witnessed growth that reveals some of the struggles we face today in the area of youth development.

- The 1960's, as a time of great political and public awareness, witnessed the first recognition of serious youth problems such as dropouts, runaways, unwed parents, abused children and youth, and delinquents. Funds to work with youth began to flow as society faced the economic and social loss of those with problems.
- The 1970's fostered the growth of alternative youth services. Increases in federal and state funds marked a shift in thinking about working with young people who were facing difficulties. By the end of the seventies, youth advocates were calling for addressing young people's needs before they ran away, dropped out, or became pregnant - i.e., prevention.
- The 1980's led practitioners and policy makers to address the high cost and modest effectiveness of crisis programs. The focus remained on reducing problems and negative youth behaviors of drinking, smoking, having sex, truancy, or violence. "Just say no" campaigns aimed at youth were prevalent and well funded.
- The 1990's brought us into the decade where research on prevention and youth development resurfaced and began to take root. Funding increased for programs that were non-problem focused and added to young people's protective factors. A call for greater community investment in youth development was heard, and agencies, schools, and families joined in a community effort to support the raising of healthy youth.

Looking forward, participation and collaboration are still considered important. As basic strategies, they empower youth, adults, teachers, staff, community members, and others to address the importance of instilling social responsibility. School-based programs, such as those funded by Title IV, bring together resources and people in energy and optimism about reducing violence and the prevalence of drugs in the lives of youth.

The Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities (SDFSC) Program is the Federal government's primary vehicle for reducing drug, alcohol and tobacco use and violence through education and prevention activities in our nation's schools. Through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) legislation, money has been sent to state education agencies and local districts to serve communities in the prevention of substance use and violence. The initiative supports the seventh National Education Goal, which aims to reduce all drug use and violence in schools. This grant works to deliver high quality programs to students and their families. The

programs build social capital among youth in our communities by bringing together schools, families, and community partnerships.

Local Policy on Youth Substance and Violence Prevention

Over the past decade, AISD has made a number of efforts to address issues of substance use and violence. For example, the Board of Trustees adopted a drug and alcohol education and prevention plan in 1992 with the goal of eliminating youth drug abuse by the year 2000 (see Appendix D). The plan identified eight major activity components to be implemented by the district, and specific responsibilities and actions to be taken by central administration staff, campus principals, other district staff, students and parents. Since then, other district efforts have been made in the area of student safety. For example, during the 1996-97 school year, an administrative school safety task force was appointed by the superintendent to propose recommendations on improving safety in the district. The task force, made up of district staff, local law enforcement, and parents, generated specific recommendations for the district to improve safety and prevent violence (see Appendix E). In 1999, a crisis management review committee was created. This committee was charged with reviewing and updating the district's school safety emergency resource manual, reviewing and updating the campuses' emergency procedures, defining and communicating the criteria for the campus management plans, reviewing and approving campus crisis plans, and developing the emergency response training program. Also in 1999, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) began requiring school districts and campuses to include violence prevention information in district/campus improvement plans, and student discipline incident data entered in PEIMS (Public Education Information Management System) became an essential component of TEA's Title IV SDFSC annual evaluation report for each school district. The AISD Board of Trustees approves the district/campus improvement plans annually, thus, endorsing AISD's violence prevention information.

AISD's Title IV SDFSC program has evolved over time, depending upon the availability of funding, personnel and program resources. Paralleling grant funding at the national level, Title IV funding allocations to the district increased from the late 1980s through 1999, and allocations began to decrease sharply in 1999-2000. Since 1996-97, AISD has received supplemental funding from the grant as a result of greatest needs status given to the district by TEA based on the district's grant application and evaluation. However, the basic allotment granted through Title IV has steadily decreased in recent years due to changes in grant funding at the national level. The U. S. Department of Education has made the Title IV grant more competitive nationally (a larger portion of federal funds toward competitive grants). This in effect has made fewer funds available for the formula allocation dispensed to all states and local education agencies that apply for such funds. The trend seems likely to continue for the near future. Therefore, AISD is expecting less formula allocations from the grant over the next several years. In fact, the allocated budget for 2000-2001 represents a 37% decrease from the previous year's funds. This has caused the district to cut back on personnel and services provided through the grant in the current school year.

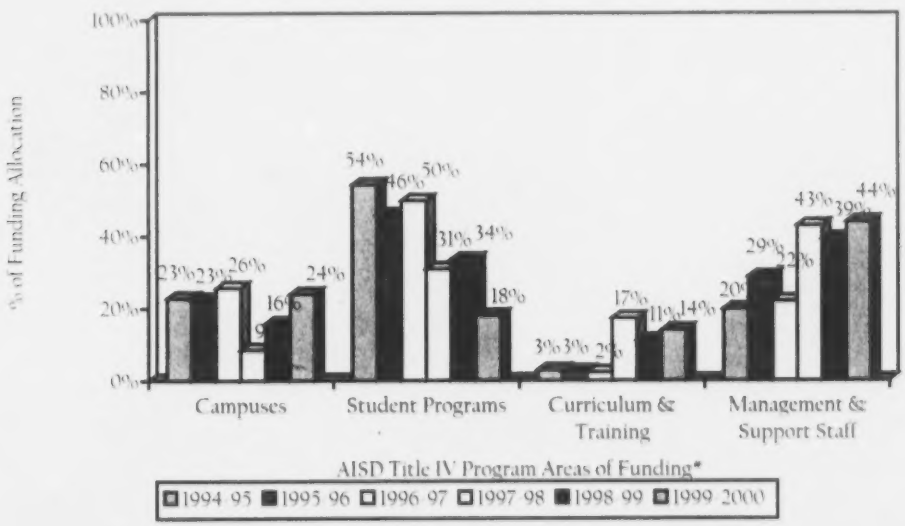
One way of identifying the changes in the AISD Title IV program over the past several years is by examining how funds have been allocated from 1994-95 to 1999-2000. The district Title IV program has supported a multifaceted approach to drug and violence prevention. There have been campus-level activities as well as district-level programs and support strategies. Campuses have received funds based on a per-pupil allocation, allowing each campus to

implement activities that are appropriate to the needs of their students, families and staff. The district-level programs and services have included the following:

- Student programs (PAL, ROPES, SUPER I, etc.);
- Curriculum support and professional development;
- Support staff (including School Support Community Specialists, Visiting Teachers, School Resource Officers, etc.); and,
- Grant management, budget, and evaluation.

Over the past several years, the particular Title IV programs and initiatives funded in the district have changed in response to the overall funding available to the district and the administrative and programmatic decisions made about the program. Using the basic categories of programs and services listed in the previous paragraph as a guide, the following trends can be seen in funding emphasis as shown in Figure 3. As funding grew from 1995-96 to 1998-99, programs were added or expanded and some staff members were added. However, other programs and staff were dropped. For example, during 1996-97, one of the first years that AISD received additional "greatest needs" funds, several programs were added or expanded, including SUPER I (an intervention program for students who had been removed to the district's alternative education program for a first-time drug possession offense), and campuses received an increase in funding. With increases in overall grant funds during these years and the number of programs, and the need to provide programs and services to more students, families and school staffs, it became necessary to expand the support of the grant programs through staff, evaluation, and resources. This expansion meant that more students, families and staff were able to participate in and benefit from district and campus programs. In addition, the accountability of the Title IV programs in the district was improved through better data collection and reporting.

Figure 3: Title IV Program Funding Emphasis by Allocation, 1994-95 to 1999-2000



Source: AISD SDFSC Program Records

*Note: Campuses category includes all funds set aside for campuses (AISD, Private, Neglected, Delinquent). Student Programs refers to district-level programs, i.e., PAL, ROPES, SUPER I-INVEST, Positive Families. Curriculum and Training refers to funds spent districtwide on curriculum materials and professional development provided to campuses. Management and Support Staff includes all district-level staff and services required to support all Title IV grant initiatives, including grant management, evaluation, curriculum, school support, etc.

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In 1997-98, funding for curriculum and management/support staff categories was increased resulting in the following actions:

- Hiring of five School Support Community Specialists, one per organizational are (vertical team), to be direct support to the campuses in all of their safety, crisis management, and Title IV activities;
- Salary support of five instructional coordinators, representing different curriculum areas, to assist schools in aligning goals and activities of core curricula with goals and activities of Title IV programs and curriculum materials;
- Provision of the state-recommended prevention curriculum guide (*Drug And Violence Education, DAVE*, 1997) to all campuses, and curriculum integration efforts from both science/health and guidance/counseling (including training and dissemination of materials).

During 1998-99, the local DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program (nationally-known program of classroom instruction by uniformed police officers on the dangers of drugs and on ways to resist negative peer pressure) was discontinued. In addition, during that same year more emphasis was put on SUPER I, and additional funds were set aside for programs and staff at the district's disciplinary Alternative Learning Center (ALC), including the Positive Families program, to extend outreach to families of students with discipline problems. During 1998-99, increases were made in campus allocations as well, while decreases were made in district-level curriculum and management/support staff. The federal government legislated the Principles of Effectiveness the same year, calling for more accountability at the state and local level for spending of Title IV funds. With improved processes for planning and evaluation already in place, AISD continued its efforts to account for the impact of Title IV expenditures in the district.

In 1999-2000, the overall district Title IV allocation decreased, reflecting the changes at the federal level to increase accountability by placing more funds in nationally competitive grants (such as the Middle School Coordinators grant, and the Safe Schools Healthy Students grant) and less funds in the regular formula allocations to the states and their school districts. Simultaneously, TEA required that school districts not carry over any substantial amount (i.e., more than 25%) of grant funding from previous years past the spending deadline of June 2000. At this time, AISD had such a grant carryover ("surplus") from 1998-99, thus there were extra funds that had to be spent within the 1999-2000 year. With this in mind, several strategies were chosen in AISD for allocating funds this same school year. With stringent accountability requirements for programs and campuses to spend their funds in appropriate, effective ways, campuses were given double the amount of previously allocated Title IV funds to spend. In addition, increases in grant support of curriculum allowed for provision of materials and training (e.g., Project ALERT, *DAVE*, Live This!, and other supplemental materials) to campus staff in an efficient way. The intent of these actions was to provide effective service to schools without their having to spend local monies out of campus budgets. Funding reductions were made in district-level student programs as well. The impact of these strategies tied programs and services more closely to campus needs, while at the same time improving the accountability of the district's entire Title IV program. This was manifested in better alignment of campus and district program plans and expenditures with Title IV grant goals and objectives, and in a higher percent of the district's grant allocation being used during 1999-2000 (89%) as compared to previous years (average approximately 56%).

CHAPTER 3: FRAMING THE PROBLEM

INTRODUCTION: METHODS AND DATA SOURCES

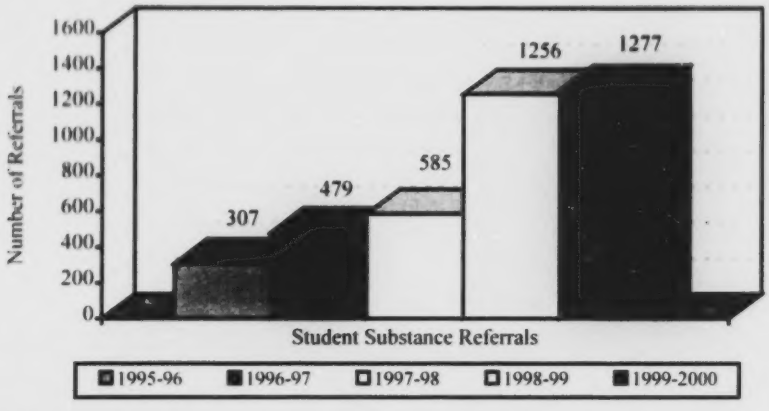
An essential part of addressing substance use and violence is an accurate understanding of the problem. To better assess Austin's youth substance abuse and violence problems and to comply with the Title IV regulation of conducting needs assessment and evaluation, AISD annually reports current substance use and violence problems within the school system. Several data sources were used to define the current incidence and prevalence of substance use and violence in AISD. These information sources include the district's discipline incident reporting system (used by campus administrators), a student self-report survey, and an employee self-report survey. The district's student discipline incident reporting system is updated each time disciplinary incidents occur. Improvements to this system since 1997-98 have led to more accurate campus reporting. The two surveys are conducted annually to random representative samples of district students and campus employees. Appendix F contains more information on these data collection methods.

SUBSTANCE USE IN AISD

DISTRICT STUDENT DISCIPLINE DATA RELATED TO SUBSTANCE USE

Discipline referrals for all substance use or possession offenses are summarized for 1995 through 2000, including offenses for tobacco, alcohol, glue or aerosol inhalants, and illegal drugs (e.g., marijuana) in Figure 4. Several trends are apparent. Substance use or possession has increased over the past two years even with steady district enrollment, and the reasons may be many, including more student use, the enforcement of a zero tolerance policy, and better record keeping. In 1999-2000, the most substance use incidents occur at the high school level (67%). The most common drug caught in possession has been marijuana (72%). More males (75%) than females have been referred for drug possession/use. See Appendix F for more details.

Figure 4: Student Discipline Referrals for Substance Use or Possession in AISD, 1995 to 2000



Source: AISD Student Discipline Records

Texas Survey of Drug and Alcohol Use

The Texas School Survey of Drug and Alcohol Use (TSSDAU) was used to assess year 2000 student substance use knowledge, behaviors and attitudes (see Appendix F for a more complete description of survey methods and the sample). The TSSDAU includes the following types of questions: self-report of substance use, attitudes and opinions about usage, actions taken while using certain substances, participation in district SDFSC prevention and education activities, school safety perceptions and experiences, and demographics.

General Usage Trends

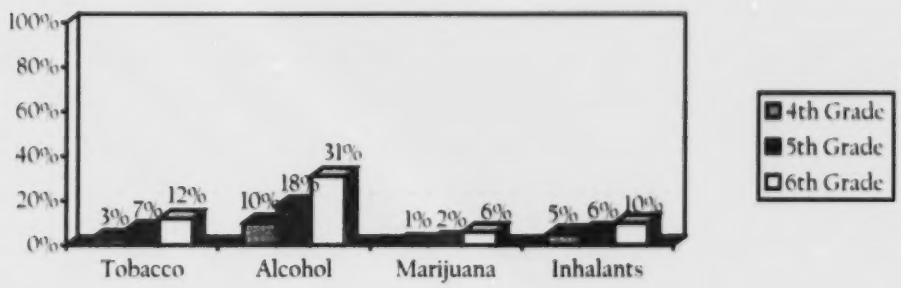
Student substance use exists among AISD students, based on survey results for several years. Students reported most often that alcohol is the substance that they have used. Reported usage levels usually increase with grade level. Examining year-to-year comparisons of reported student substance use, results for the 1999-2000 year appear to be commensurate with survey results from all other previous years (see Appendix F for year-to-year comparisons). Specific survey results will be described next.

Elementary Survey

Figures 5 and 6 show that incidence of elementary (grades 4, 5 and 6) substance use increases by grade, with sixth graders reporting the highest usage of all substances. The percentage of sixth grade students who reported having ever used tobacco in their lifetime was 20%. Since these students reported an average of using tobacco only two to four times, indicating infrequent use, this use may be experimental.

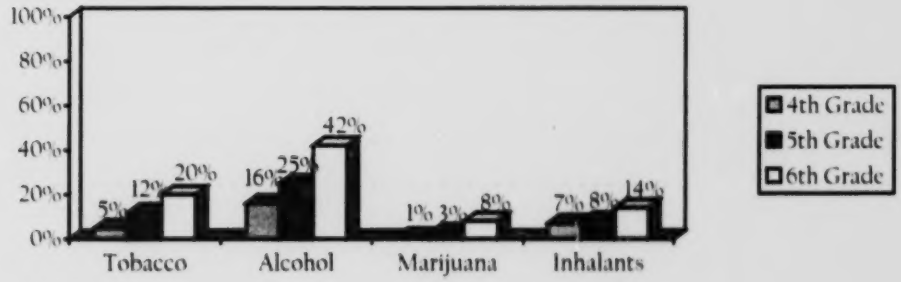
Other substances used by elementary student survey respondents included alcohol, marijuana, and inhalants. Alcohol was the substance most often used (31% reported using in the past year, 42% reported ever using), followed by tobacco, inhalants and marijuana. Again, student substance use may be experimental at the elementary grades since the frequency of usage reported for alcohol, marijuana and inhalants was low (average usage between three and seven times). However, even single instances of these substances are dangerous. For example, inhalant use has been shown to cause irreversible damage to the liver, kidneys and bone marrow, and deep inhalation may cause sudden death even the first time used (CSAP, 1999; Rosenberg & Sharp, 1992). Percentage of usage for all substances and all grades is comparable to past years (with the exception of 1998-99, where recent use rates may be underreported; see Appendix F).

Figure 5: Percentage of AISD Elementary Students Recent (Past Year) Substance Use, 2000



Source: TSSDAU, 2000

Figure 6: Percentage of AISD Elementary Students Reporting Ever Used Substances, 2000



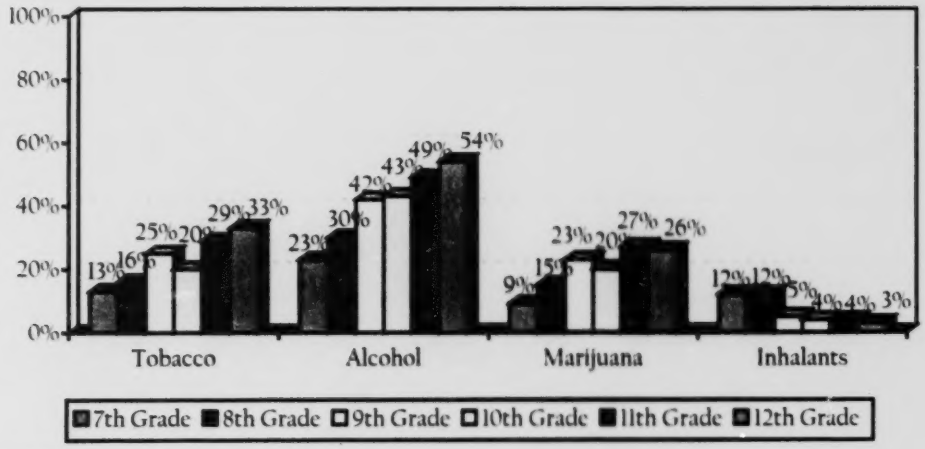
Source: TSSDAU, 2000

Secondary Survey

The secondary survey (given to a student sample from grades 7-12) assessed reported use of tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, inhalants, cocaine, crack, hallucinogens, uppers, downers, rohypnol, steroids, and heroin. Appendix F contains information on reported lifetime usage rates for illegal substances other than marijuana. Figures 7 and 8 illustrate reported usage rates for tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, and inhalants. Consistent with previous years' survey results, tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, and inhalants were the most commonly used substances as reported by students, with alcohol having the highest reported usage rates (54% past month, 85% ever).

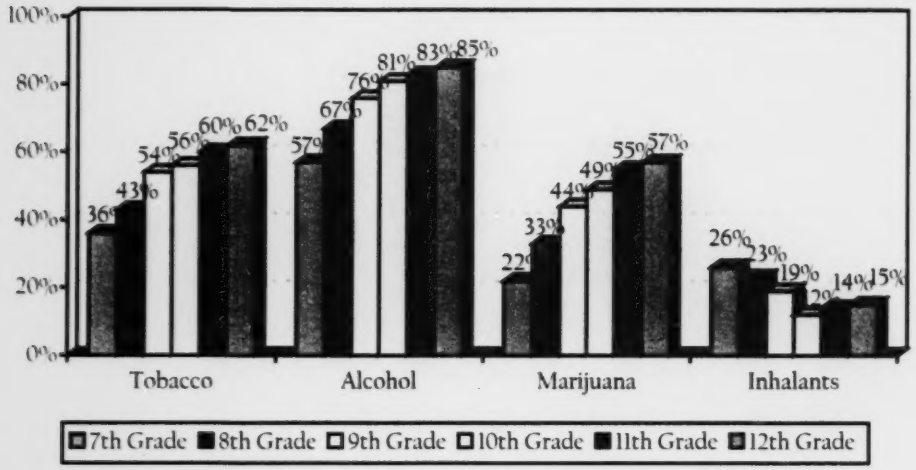
Generally, substance use among secondary students surveyed showed incremental increases by grade level with jumps in use at the ninth grade for some substances. However, inhalant use did not follow this trend, with decreases occurring by grade level. That is, 12% of seventh graders reported recent inhalant use, whereas only three percent of 12th graders reported recent use. There may be issues with easier availability and access to inhalants in the community among younger children. Appendix F shows that compared to previous years, recent use and having ever used a substance were found to be stable or decreasing.

Figure 7: Percentage of AISD Secondary Students Reporting Recent (Past Month) Substance Use, 2000



Source: TSSDAU, 2000

Figure 8: Percentage of AISD Secondary Students Reporting Having Ever Used Substances, 2000

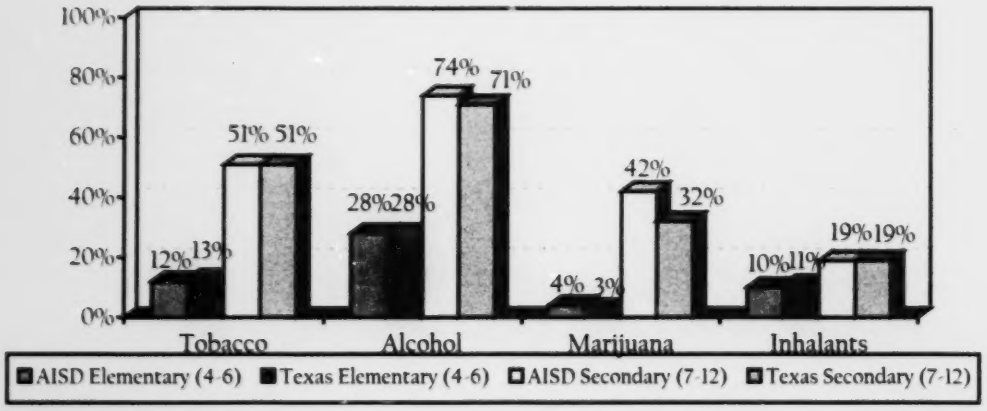


Source: TSSDAU, 2000

Comparisons of AISD to State Results

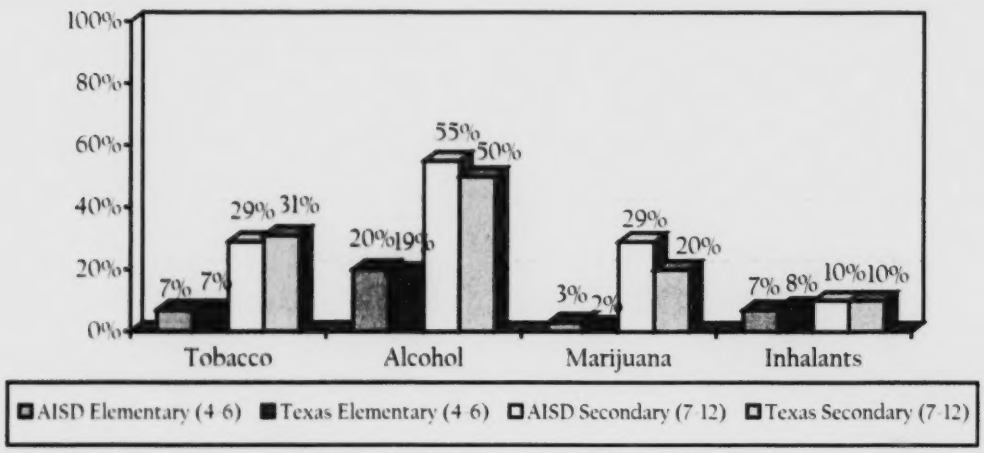
Percents of AISD students using tobacco, alcohol, marijuana and inhalants were compared to data for students across Texas as part of the state sample. As shown in Figure 9, there was very little difference between AISD and state results in percentages of students who reported having ever used tobacco, alcohol and inhalants. However, for marijuana, there was a higher reported usage rate for AISD secondary students (42%) than for Texas secondary students (32%) surveyed. When examining recent (past year) reported usage, AISD and Texas showed similar rates for tobacco and inhalants, as shown in Figure 10. AISD elementary student samples show similar usage rates to all Texas elementary students sampled for all four substances examined. Percents of AISD secondary students reporting past year alcohol usage (55%) were higher than for all Texas secondary students sampled (50%). Percents of AISD secondary students reporting past year marijuana usage also were higher (29%) than for all Texas secondary students surveyed (20%).

Figure 9: AISD vs. Texas on Students Reporting Ever Used Substances, 2000



Source: TSSDAU 2000

Figure 10: AISD vs. Texas on Students Reported Recent (Past Year) Substance Usage, 2000



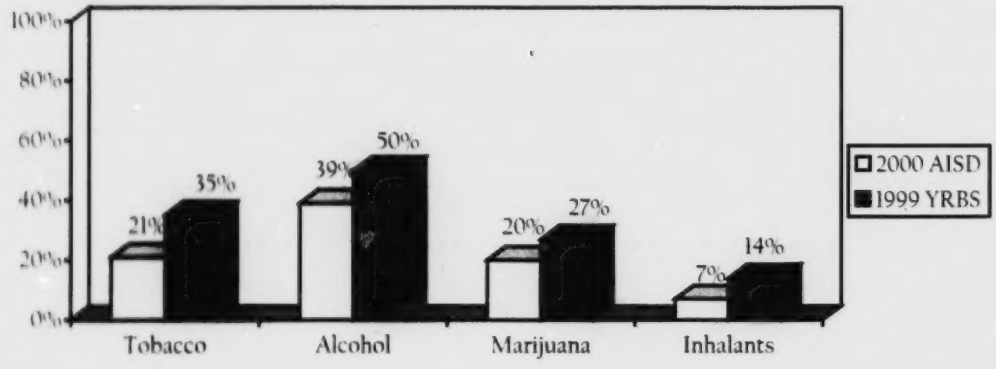
Source: TSSDAU, 2000

Comparisons of AISD Survey Results to National Results

To compare the extent of reported substance use in AISD during the 1999-2000 school year with that at the national level, the TSSDAU secondary students' responses were compared with national averages from the Center for Disease Control's *1999 Youth Risk Behavior Survey* (YRBS) (CDC, 1999). The YRBS was chosen for comparison to the TSSDAU because these instruments are similar in format and used to assess similar populations.

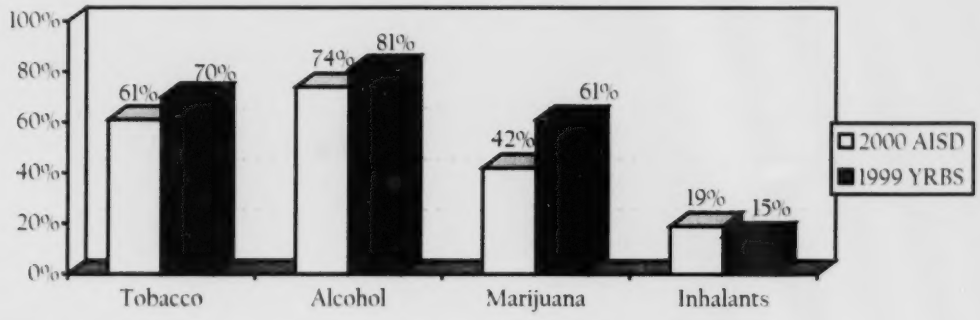
As shown in Figures 11 and 12, the percents of AISD secondary students who reported recent (past year) substance usage during 2000 and having ever used substances in their lifetime (for tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana) were lower than for those in the national sample assessed in 1999. However, the percent of AISD secondary students who reported having ever used inhalants was slightly higher than that of the national sample.

Figure 11: Percentage of Secondary Students Reporting Recent Substance Use, AISD 2000 vs. YRBS 1999



Source: TSSDAU, 2000; YRBS, 1999

Figure 12: Percentage of Secondary Students Reporting Ever Used Substances, AISD 2000 vs. YRBS 1999



Source: TSSDAU, 2000; YRBS, 1999

Student Perceptions of Substance Use

Historically, student substance use surveys included students' perceptions of the dangers of specific drug use in order to examine the relationship between perceived danger and actual use (e.g., Johnston, O'Malley, & Bachman, 1995). Table 1 summarizes AISD students' ratings of the dangers of using tobacco, alcohol, inhalants, and marijuana. Overall, most students viewed these substances as dangerous or very dangerous. However, at the secondary school level, perceived danger of tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana lessened. This decrease in fearful attitude towards these substances was accompanied by an increase in usage. A similar relationship existed between perceived danger and use for inhalants, although it was in a different direction. That is, students' perception of the danger of inhalants increased by grade at the secondary level and reported inhalant usage decreased (see Figure 8 and Appendix F for usage data).

Table 1: AISD Students' Perceptions of the Danger of Substance Use, 2000

Substance	Very Dangerous or Dangerous	Not Very or Not At All Dangerous	Don't Know or Never Heard Of	Average Percent Of Past Year Usage
Tobacco				
Elementary	93%	1%	6%	7%
Secondary	78%	18%	5%	29%
Alcohol				
Elementary	91%	3%	6%	20%
Secondary	78%	19%	3%	55%
Marijuana				
Elementary	87%	2%	11%	3%
Secondary	70%	17%	4%	29%
Inhalants				
Elementary	83%	3%	14%	7%
Secondary	90%	4%	6%	10%

Source: TSSDAU, 2000

Other Factors Related to Substance Use

Substance use has been examined in relation to other factors, including poor academic performance (McWhirter, McWhirter, McWhirter & McWhirter, 1993), school conduct problems (Huizinga, et al., 1994), drinking and driving (CDC, 1996), and increased school absences (Greenwood, 1992). Other research has shown that certain environmental/social variables, such as having plans for the future, can act as buffers or protective factors that influence whether an individual will use drugs (e.g., Jessor, 1992; Turner, 1994; McCullough, Ashbridge, & Pegg, 1994). Finally, most survey research investigates where students get information about drugs, and whom they would go to for help. Survey data relating to these areas are summarized in this section.

Academic Performance

Among secondary student respondents, reported illicit substance use was compared with students' self-reported typical academic grades. Higher academic performance seemed to be more common among students who had never used drugs, however no causal relationship can be established with this data. For instance, among students who reported usually getting A's and B's, a lower percentage of students have used illicit drugs (39%) than among those who reported usually getting C's, D's or F's (60%). Tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, and inhalants use also is lower for A and B students than C, D, and F students. Table 2 represents reported substance usage by grades received among secondary students surveyed.

Table 2: AISD Secondary Students' Reported Substance Use by Reported Typical Grades Received

Substance	A and B Students	C, D and F Students
Tobacco	48%	64%
Alcohol	72%	81%
Marijuana	38%	59%
Inhalants	16%	30%

Source: TSSDAU, 2000

Problem Behaviors

Substance use was examined in relation to selected problem behaviors such as binge drinking, behavioral conduct problems, attending class while under the influence, driving under the influence, and difficulty with friends as a result of use. For example, 17% of secondary student respondents reported binge drinking (five or more drinks at a time) on several occasions during the month before the survey. Secondary students who used alcohol also were four times more likely to report school conduct problems. Thirteen percent of secondary student respondents reported attending class while drunk, and nine percent reported difficulty with friends as a result of drinking. Furthermore, approximately 10% of secondary respondents indicated that they had brought drugs or alcohol to school during the past year.

National statistics have shown that nearly one-third of all motor vehicle fatalities within this age group are alcohol-related (NHTSA, 1996). In the survey results, 12% of secondary students reported operating a vehicle after having "a good bit to drink".

According to survey results marijuana and other drug use also was related to an increase in problem behaviors. Marijuana users reported behavioral conduct problems over three times as often as non-marijuana users. Of survey respondents, 17% of students reported attending class

while high from marijuana, 12% reported driving while high from drugs, and seven percent reported difficulties with friends as a result of drug use.

Other Personal and Social Factors

Several questions were posed to secondary student respondents regarding personal plans, communication with others, and perceptions of their environment, variables that have been examined in research. These results seemed positive with most respondents having such protective factors, in spite of the substance use rates reported. For example, when students were asked if they had plans following high school completion, 90% reported that they had some plan, whether it was post-secondary education, a job or the military. Students also were asked about their communication with family and friends. Two-thirds of respondents indicated that it was somewhat or very easy to talk with their families about problems, concerns or personal decisions. In addition, 90% of respondents indicated that they had at least one close friend with whom they could talk on a regular basis about problems, concerns or personal decisions.

School Environment

Secondary students surveyed were asked to select from a list the most serious problem on their campus. Of those responding, the most commonly selected problem was illegal drug use (22%). Alcohol use (11%) and tobacco use (7%) also were mentioned, thus, showing that students are concerned about substance use at their campus. Other frequently selected problems will be described later in the section on safety and violence.

When secondary students were asked to rate how strictly their school staffs enforced school rules on drug, alcohol and tobacco use, 66% responded that their school strictly enforced such rules against substance use. Approximately 19% indicated that their school was not strict, and 15% did not know. When students were asked about the presence of substance use at school-sponsored events, 55% responded that substance use was somewhat or very common at such events (19% said it was uncommon, and 25% did not know).

Substance Availability

Another factor that may be related to substance use is ease of attainment. When secondary students were asked how easy it would be to obtain certain substances, cigarettes (72%), alcohol (71%), and marijuana (59%) were viewed as most available (inhalant availability was not asked). Fewer students rated other drugs, such as cocaine, crack, hallucinogens, steroids, ecstasy, and heroin, as being easy to obtain, ranging from 14% for heroin or crack to 23% for ecstasy. Thus, those substances that are perceived as most available are those most commonly used. Cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana are the three most commonly used substances as reported by secondary students.

Sources of Information

Elementary students were asked to report their school sources of information about drugs or alcohol. Tables 3 and 4 list elementary and secondary students' responses by selected information source. Students could list more than one source. The majority of elementary (86%) and secondary students (60%) reported that they received information about the dangers of drugs from a school source. The most common specific sources of information on the dangers of drugs or alcohol were the classroom teacher (68%) for elementary students, and health class (44%) for secondary students.

Table 3: Elementary Student Respondents- Sources of Drug/Alcohol Information

Information Source	Percent Receiving Information
Any school source	86%
Your teacher	68%
A school counselor	55%
An assembly program	49%
A visitor to your class	46%
Someone else at school	40%

Source: TSSDAU, 2000

Table 4: Secondary Student Respondents- Sources of Drug/Alcohol Information

Information Source	Percent Receiving Information
Any school source	60%
Health class	44%
An assembly program	38%
An invited guest	35%
Science class	32%
A school counselor	17%
Student group sessions	14%
Social studies class	12%

Source: TSSDAU, 2000

Sources of Help

Secondary student respondents were asked to report to whom they would go if they had a problem with drugs or alcohol. Table 5 displays the percentages of students who would use specific sources of help. Note that students could choose more than one source of help. Secondary student respondents reported that they were most likely to ask friends for help (78%).

Table 5: Secondary Student Respondents – Use of Help Sources

Source of Help	Percent That Would Ask For Help
Your friends	78%
Other adult (relative, clergy, friend)	57%
Your parents	54%
A medical doctor	40%
A counselor or program outside of school	38%
A counselor or program at school	38%
Another adult in school (nurse, teacher)	27%

Source: TSSDAU, 2000

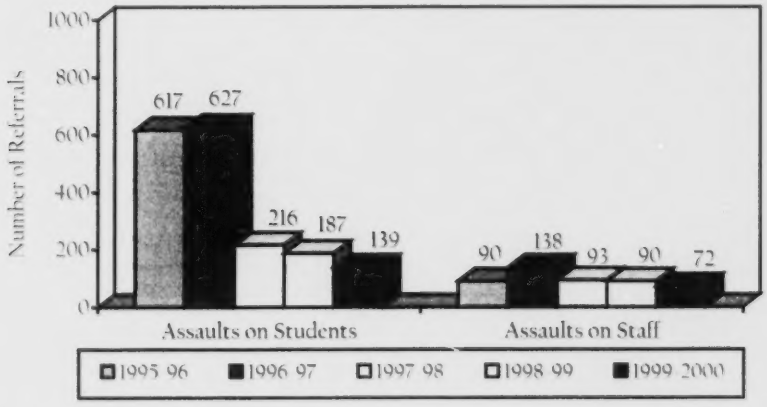
The staff respondent sample (elementary and secondary campus staff members) was asked to estimate whether students at their school used tobacco, alcohol, and/or marijuana. When asked about tobacco, 17% of all respondents indicated that no students on their campus used tobacco, while approximately 26% did not know. The remaining 57% indicated that some students at their school used tobacco. When asked about alcohol, 18% of staff respondents indicated that no students at their school used alcohol, while 29% indicated they did not know. Thus, about 53% of staff responded that at least some students used alcohol. Finally, when asked about students at their school using marijuana, 18% said there was no marijuana use, 29% said they did not know, and 53% responded that at least some students at their school used marijuana. For more details on these survey results, see Appendix F.

VIOLENCE IN AISD

DISTRICT STUDENT DISCIPLINE DATA ON VIOLENCE

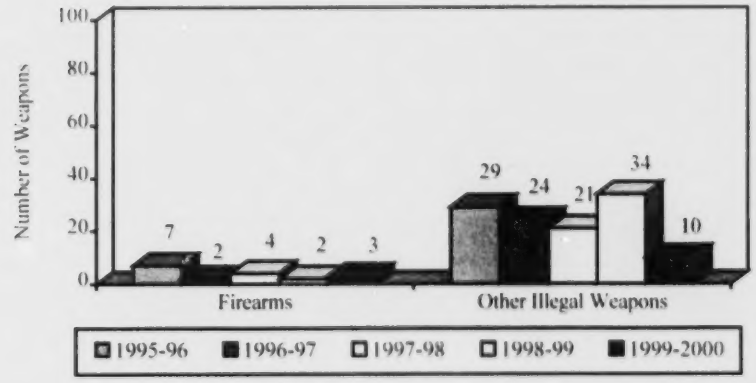
In Figure 13, the numbers of student discipline referrals for all assaults on students and on staff are summarized for 1995-96 through 1999-2000. Most assaults occurred at the middle school level (130 assaults, or 62%), followed by high school level (76 assaults, or 36%), and elementary level (five assaults, or 2%). Numbers of assaults on students and on staff have declined for four years in a row, representing an improvement. The numbers of illegal weapon possessions are summarized over the same period in Figure 14. Most weapons possessions occurred at middle school (nine incidents), followed by high school (six incidents), and elementary school (one incident). All but one incident (elementary) involved male students. Instances of weapons possession, while showing an increase from two to three in firearms for 1999-2000, has shown a drop (from 34 to 10) in other illegal weapons (e.g., knives, clubs, etc.), and levels are lower than they were five years ago.

Figure 13: Assault Discipline Referrals in AISD, 1995-96 to 1999-2000



Source: AISD Student Discipline Records

Figure 14: Weapons Possession in AISD, 1995-96 to 1999-2000



Source: AISD Student Discipline Records

Texas School Survey of Drug and Alcohol Use

Secondary student respondents to the Texas School Survey answered several questions having to do with safety. Students were asked how safe they feel at home, at school, and in their neighborhood. Overall, almost all students feel safe at home (97%) and in their neighborhoods (90%). When asked how safe they feel at school, 83% responded that they felt safe, while 14% did not feel safe (3% responded "don't know"). These data are comparable to survey results from 1998-99 (84% felt safe).

Students were asked to indicate the strictness with which their school enforced rules on violence such as fighting and assaults. More than two thirds of respondents indicated that their school strictly enforced such rules, while 14% did not think their school was very strict, and 10% did not know. When asked what was the most serious problem on the campus, verbal assaults and threats (17%), fighting (16%), vandalism and theft (9%), weapons (3%), and gangs (2%) were rated in addition to substance use as reported earlier in this text.

To further explore students' sense of safety, secondary students were asked whether they or a close friend had been physically harmed or threatened in the past year, to which 60% responded "never" and 40% indicated "one or more times". When students were asked if they had harmed or threatened others in the past year, the majority of respondents (75%) indicated "never".

Secondary student respondents also were asked if they or their friends ever carried weapons to school. Approximately 60% indicated that they had never brought weapons to school, while 1% reported bringing a gun or stun gun, 8% reported bringing a knife and 7% reported bringing some other weapon. Approximately 65% reported that none of their friends carry weapons, while 31% indicated that a few or some of their friends carry weapons. Only 4% indicated that most or all of their friends carry weapons.

Employee Coordinated Survey

Staff respondents to AISD's Employee Coordinated Survey reported their perceptions of safety on campus. When asked about staff safety, almost all respondents to the annual survey indicated that they felt safe (only three percent felt unsafe). These results are comparable to data from 1998-99 (see Appendix F). When asked if they had been harmed or threatened with harm by a student during the school year, 79% reported that they had never been harmed or threatened. Approximately 15% reported having been threatened or harmed one or two times, and six percent indicated they had had such incidents three or more times during the year. When asked what was the most serious behavior problem on campus, the most commonly selected response was student safety issues such as fighting, harassment, and threats (67%). Another question posed to staff was whether they had witnessed student fights during the year. Of those responding, 43% said they had not witnessed student fights, while 34% had witnessed at least one or two, and 23% had witnessed three or more. Other results from the safety and discipline issues addressed in the employee survey are summarized in Appendix F.

CHAPTER 4: AT A GLANCE: AISD TITLE IV STUDENT PROGRAMS

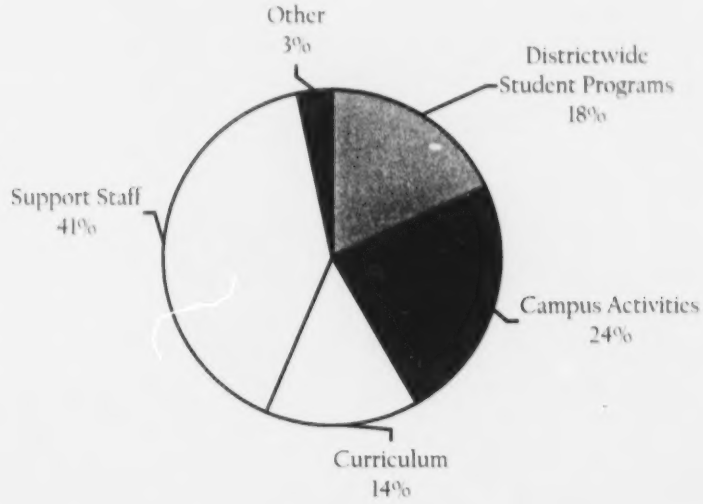
INTRODUCTION TO "AT A GLANCE" CHAPTERS 4-8

In Chapters 4 through 8 of this report, highlights of AISD Title IV programs and initiatives will be presented using the "At a Glance" format. This format is designed for a discussion of various components of the school district's efforts to support the goal of the Title IV grant: to promote a safe and drug free learning environment that encourages student, staff, parent, and community involvement. The "At a Glance" format consists of a single page that introduces the AISD Title IV programs and provides a snapshot to describe these programs and some evaluation findings. The "At a Glance" format is intended to provide the reader with a brief summary of the AISD Title IV programs and activities funded during 1999-2000 prior to reading the more detailed evaluation findings that follow.

Chapters 4 through 8 will cover the various Title IV components. Chapter 4 will summarize the evaluation of district-level student programs. Chapter 5 will highlight the evaluation of campus-level activities. Chapter 6 will describe the efforts made in curriculum and staff training, especially in the areas of health and guidance/counseling. Chapter 7 will outline the school support efforts for the grant at both the district and campus levels. Finally, Chapter 8 will describe some of the collaborations that AISD has within the school district and with the community of Austin. The Appendices contain more detailed evaluation results for the district- and campus-level programs funded by Title IV.

Figure 15 presents the allocation of 1999-2000 Title IV funds to AISD's major prevention efforts. The districtwide student programs receive almost all of their funding from the Title IV grant. The support staffs are either totally or partially funded through Title IV funds. The remaining components receive only a small percentage of their total funding from Title IV.

Figure 15: 1999-2000 AISD Title IV Allocations Per Grant Component



Source: AISD SDFSC Records

At a Glance:

ROPES: REALITY ORIENTED PHYSICAL EXPERIENTIAL SESSION

The ROPES program is a series of workshops designed around physical challenges that provide experiential learning. Through team building exercises, students participate in the creation and transformation of experience into knowledge, skills and attitudes that have been shown to have an impact on their future decisions. The goals of the ROPES program are to increase students' level of self- confidence, improve decision-making skills, and help students see themselves as leaders. Target domains include:

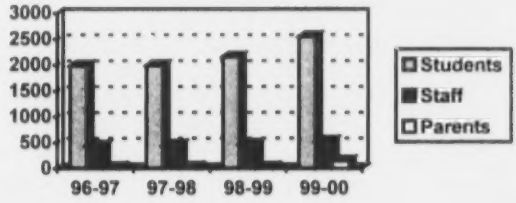
- ✓ Individual
- ✓ Family
- ✓ School
- ✓ Peer Group

Risk and resiliency research has shown that developing skills of leadership, communication, and negative peer pressure resistance lead to prevention of substance use and violence.

AISD ROPES program served over 2,555 students in 1999-2000. Since its inception in the district in 1991, over 18,000 students have benefited from the hands-on learning provided by one program manager, and two support staff. Findings from this year's evaluation include:

- **Dramatic improvements in communication skills, leadership ability, decision making skills, positive self-concept and conflict resolution.**
- **Overall discipline referral rates are lower for ROPES participants than for district.**
- **Teachers trained to facilitate ROPES felt that it made them better teachers.**
- **Most workshop participants gave ROPES an "A" grade.**

Number of ROPES Participants 1996 - 2000



"I feel the most effective thing about the ROPES course is the leadership role students take. Sometimes the loudest child is not always right. The students learn to listen to everyone in the group, and I always return with students who feel better about themselves because of their ideas and that the group listened to them."

Recommendations:

The following recommendations are based on surveys, student data, and feedback from program staff and participants.

- Campus teachers and staff should follow-up ROPES course with Phase IV activities that increase the impact of the "no use" message.
- Greater allocation of financial resources to ROPES to allow a higher rate of participation by students. Over 2,000 were declined in the 1999-2000 school year due to lack of program resources.
- Additional workshops for teachers and campus staff in planning and facilitating Phase IV activities.
- Expand the ROPES staff and develop more programs for AISD students.

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ROPES: REALITY ORIENTED PHYSICAL EXPERIENTIAL SESSION

> "I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand."
> - Confucius

The ROPES program is a series of workshops designed around physical challenges that provide experiential learning for students and staff in AISD. Through a series of team building exercises, students participate in the creation and transformation of experience into knowledge, skills and attitudes that have been shown to have an impact on their future decisions. More specifically, the AISD Frost ROPES Course provides an experiential educational opportunity for students and staff to build skills in leadership, trust, communication, collective problem solving, decision-making and resistance to peer pressure. Risk and resiliency research has shown that developing these skills in students can lead to the prevention of substance use and violence (CSAP, 1999).

The ROPES program, supported by Title IV funds in 1999-2000, reached over 2,555 students in the district and 678 staff and other adults. SDFSC funds were used for the following: salaries of a program manager and two-staff program specialists, pay for substitutes to allow participation by teachers, transportation costs, program support (e.g., supplies), and staff development (e.g., conference, certification). Since the program's inception in the district in 1991, over 18,000 students have been served as well as over 4,000 staff and other adults.

This year, several new programs were started by the ROPES staff, which included ROPES certification for 32 AISD staff, and weekend family programs for over 50 families. These additional weekend programs were in response to the increased number of workshop requests from schools and organizations that could not be filled due to the limited number of ROPES facilitators. For the 1999-2000 school year, the ROPES program calendar was at maximum capacity as of September 15, 1999. Due to the lack of adequate time and appropriate number of trained ROPES facilitators, 2,000 additional students and staff who requested workshops at the ROPES course could not be served.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING & ROPES PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

What is Experiential Learning?

The ROPES program is embedded in the theory of experiential education. Experiential learning may be defined as the process of creating and transforming experience into knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs, and senses (Jarvis, Holford, & Griffin, 1998). The ROPES course offers such a process to students through team-building situations that achieve a variety of goals including the prevention of student drug use and violence.

One of the goals of the ROPES program is to impart a no-use message to students to convey that drug use is wrong and harmful. Through the development of specific protective factors or skills during their participation, it is hoped that this message will help prevent students from illegally using drugs or alcohol and prevent violent behaviors. To accomplish these goals, the ROPES program specialists focus on the following objectives:

- Increase students' levels of self confidence;
- Improve students' abilities to make decisions, work in groups, solve problems, make better choices, share ideas, listen to others; and

- Help students see themselves as leaders through the development of leadership skills.

Every ROPES activity conducted has a specific purpose for meeting a goal and objective(s). As in real life, each ROPES activity includes consequences for participants' actions, which make accomplishing objectives more challenging. Depending on the participants' actions, consequences can be positive or negative. Other examples are included in Appendix G. For one detailed example of how a specific ROPES activity meets program objectives, see Figure 16: "How it Works: Activity During ROPES Course."

Figure 16: How it Works: Activity During ROPES Course

As a series of workshops, the ROPES program utilizes teambuilding exercises as a way of developing leadership and decision-making skills for youth participants. The activities and physical challenges the group encounters are engaged around a developmental cycle present in all groups. ROPES staff provides circumstances in which students can plan successful experiences in games, trust activities, and initiative problems. Through deliberate use of sequentially planned activities, the facilitator leads the group through 4 general phases of group development during the day:

I- Acquainting the group,
II- De-inhibiting participants,
III- Trusting physically and emotionally,
IV- Communication,
V- Problem solving

Phase III Activity: The Trust Fall

The trust fall is an activity in which a participant falls backwards from a safe height into arms of fellow participants. The trust fall increases trust among participants, and it sets the stage for groups to listen and cooperate with each other.

The objectives of utilizing this activity are:

- Provide a physically and emotionally safe environment;
- Provide opportunity for individuals to be trustworthy;
- Understand the value and delicate nature of trust between people.

Debriefing questions that allow students to reflect, listen, and learn from their experience include:

- "What was the most difficult part for you?"
- "If you lose someone's trust, how hard is it to get it back?
- "Describe what it was like for you to be the

"For participants, the experience is both stressful and joyous. Ideally as they dare to try, they begin to experience physical success and recognize that the seemingly difficult is often quite possible. Their struggles are often the beginnings of maturing that entails, in part, having real experience with a wide range of natural human reactions- fear, joy, fatigue, compassion, laughter, and love."

-Karl Rohnke
Cowstails and Cobras
1989

ROPES Course Goals:

- To increase personal confidence.
- To increase mutual support within a group.
- To develop leadership skills.
- To increase joy in being with others.
- To develop problem solving skills in a group setting.

Philosophy

The philosophy of the ROPES program, based in the methodology of John Dewey, elicits students to interpret their experiences as a mental construct for understanding future situations (Dewey, 1959). That is, they learn to ask questions and to comprehend how social interactions lead to an understanding of situations that life presents. For Dewey, education depends on action; knowledge and ideas emerge only from a situation in which learners have to draw them out of experiences that have meaning and importance to them (Dewey, 1916). These situations have to occur in a social context, such as a ROPES course, where students join in manipulating materials and, thus, creating a community of learners who build their knowledge together.

At the ROPES course, students build relationships, which in turn become protective factors for them to continue to construct questions and make more positive choices. As students build relations with both peers and their teachers, this knowledge is transferred to all areas of their lives. In school, students make connections to their previous experiences at the ROPES course, and this enables them to make better decisions by going through the reflection process.

Phases of ROPES

The ROPES program consists of five phases with the first two phases occurring on campus. Each phase is developmentally and instructionally suitable for the students being served, and all phases stress the no-use message. Sequentially each phase integrates lessons that are essential for building competencies in self-reflection, decision-making, and communication. Phase I introduces the concepts to teachers and sets the stage for a safe and challenging experience for the students. Teachers are trained in strategies for facilitating small group activities and processing group learning. Phase II entails student orientation, in which students are introduced to program activities by ROPES staff and teacher facilitators. Phase III involves a day-long retreat at the ROPES course in which students and teacher-facilitators participate in experiential educational activities designed to develop leadership skills, trust, communication, collective problem-solving and negative peer pressure resistance. Based on teacher discretion, Phase IV is offered to students to link students' ROPES experiences with personally relevant life experiences through brainstorming and role-playing techniques. The final phase, Phase V, involves a second full day retreat during which the students once again practice their decision-making, communication, and problem solving skills. Elementary student workshops include only the first four phases of the program, eliminating Phase V in order to serve more students from those schools.

In previous years, a ROPES course program specialist taught Phase IV. However due to an increase in requests for Phase III of the ROPES course, AISD campus teachers and staff are now responsible for facilitating the curriculum for Phase IV. This change has led to less "follow-up" sessions and has minimized the impact of the no-use drug message that is particularly stressed in Phase IV.

ROPES Program Evaluation

In order to assess ROPES program effectiveness, several evaluation methods were used including surveys, focus groups, and examination of student discipline records. All program participants including students, staff, teachers, facilitators, mentors, parents and adults from the community were surveyed. This broad array of ROPES evaluation participants allowed for a better understanding of program impact. Additionally, focus groups were conducted for a more

detailed narrative of program benefits and shortcomings. The overall results indicate that program objectives were satisfactorily met. In fact, the general response from participants was highly positive in regards to most aspects of the ROPES program (see Appendix G).

For example, the vast majority of respondents surveyed indicated gains for students in communication skills, leadership ability, decision-making skills, positive self-concept, and conflict resolution as a result of ROPES participation. In terms of specific skills and traits affected, there was a reported increase in all skills/traits assessed. For instance, there was 100% agreement that trust and problem-solving ability were greatly affected as a result of ROPES participation. Listening, trust, observation, self-esteem, problem solving, perception, communication, leadership, confrontation of fears, and learning increased according to the majority of participants.

The impact of ROPES participation on substance use prevention education was less pronounced. That is, 35% to 64% of various respondent groups believed that ROPES participation allowed students a greater understanding of the negative consequences of using drugs and alcohol. A less strong endorsement of the relationship between ROPES participation and drug/alcohol education may be due to program objectives. The ROPES program is intended to promote protective factors against drug/alcohol use rather than direct drug/alcohol education.

Parents and other adults who had participated in ROPES were surveyed concerning the structure and effectiveness of ROPES, and most considered ROPES a good use of student and classroom time and a valuable allocation of district resources. In fact, 82% of adult participants gave the ROPES workshop an "A" grade. Survey results indicated that most students and staff benefited from ROPES in terms of meeting program objectives. However, only 57% of teaching staff felt that the first meeting for orientation (Phase I) was beneficial to their role as a facilitator for Phase IV.

The Teacher Training and Certification ROPES program was implemented for the first time this year in order to:

- Initiate and maintain ROPES certified staff at local campuses;
- Allow for expanded delivery of services, and;
- Apply skills learned from the ROPES program back to the classroom and administration.

During 1999-2000, three staff training sessions were completed, thereby qualifying a group of AISD campus staffs as ROPES assistant facilitators. Staff participants were surveyed on whether their teaching and administration skills were affected by ROPES participation. Over 70% of respondents stated that ROPES training helped them with classroom facilitation, teaching the usefulness of problem solving, creating trust and cohesion in the classroom, and improving their relationships with other staff and faculty.

Also new in 1999-2000, the ROPES Family/Mentor Program focused on providing workshop activities for family groups. The curriculum is designed to enable participants to experience the relevance, importance and necessity of communication, building and maintaining positive relationships, group problem solving and diversity. Potential participants were contacted through the use of flyers and presentations at schools. In addition, families participating in the INVEST and Positive Families programs (funded by Title IV) were extended invitations to participate in the ROPES program to provide a follow up experience that would reinforce what had been learned in the INVEST and Positive Families classes. Survey results indicated that most

ROPES family/mentor program participants reported a greater understanding of self and others as a result of ROPES. In addition, both students and parents/mentors reported having gained skills in effective group problem solving.

ROPES Program Participants, 1996-97 to 1998-99, and 1999-2000

Students who had previously participated in the ROPES program were followed up in 1998-99 and 1999-2000 for discipline offenses. In each year, the average discipline rate for program participants ranged between six percent and ten percent, lower than the district average (22% in 1998-99 and 18% in 1999-2000). Of those students with discipline offenses, the most common type of offense was for abusive conduct to other students.

The discipline referral rate during 1999-2000 for 1999-2000 ROPES participants was 6%, also lower than the district, and these individuals will be followed up in 2000-2001 for any change in their discipline rate.

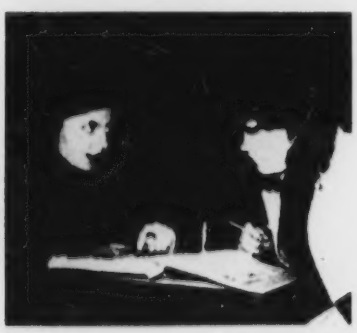
At a Glance:

PAL: PEER ASSISTANCE AND LEADERSHIP

The PAL program is a yearlong peer-helping program offering course credit to selected eighth, eleventh, and twelfth graders who act as peer helpers. PALs meet regularly with their PALees, discussing topics including self-esteem, substance use, decision-making, and relationships. Tutoring is also provided if needed. The goals of the PAL program are to provide both individual and group peer support, help prevent students from dropping out of school, help students make more informed and responsible decisions, promote improved behavior and school attendance, encourage improvement in academic performance, and provide tutoring. Target domains include

- ✓ Individual
- ✓ Family
- ✓ School
- ✓ Peer Group
- ✓ Community
- ✓ Society

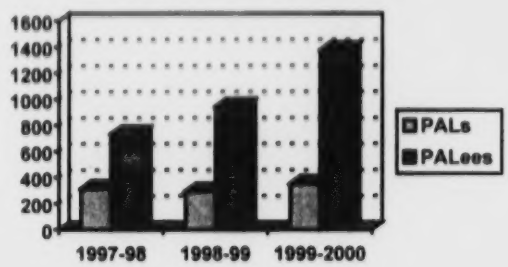
Research in peer helping has shown that effective programs can build protective factors



Findings from this year's PAL program evaluation include:

- **PALs and PALees made significant gains in self-esteem, decision making, asking for help when needed, taking responsibility for their actions, and getting along with others.**
- **Overall discipline rates are lower for PAL participants than for the district.**
- **PALs described their experiences as "life changing."**
- **Positive behavioral, attitudinal and personality changes occurred as a result of PAL participation.**

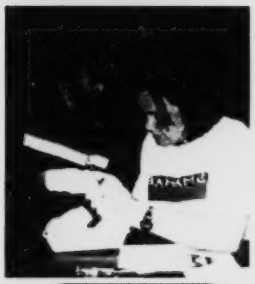
Participation Rates 1997-2000



Recommendations:

The AISD PAL program is one way of addressing the importance of student peer relationships. Recommendations include:

- Greater district support through compensation of PAL teachers.
- All PAL students develop one on one relationships with their PALees.
- Select PAL teacher facilitators through volunteers, not assignment.
- Expand program to all middle and high school campuses and more elementary campuses.



"The PAL program is like a river that flows both ways. The younger student experiences the benefit of having a support system, and the older student develops the maturity gained from taking on the responsibility of being a role model."

"Due to the PAL program, I have a firmer grasp on how important love, respect, unity, and consideration are."

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PAL: Peer Assistance and Leadership

> "We are what we do."
> Aristotle

PAL Introduction

The PAL program is a yearlong peer-helping program offering course credit to selected eighth, eleventh, and twelfth graders who act as peer helpers (PALs) to other students (PALees) at their own school as well as schools in their vertical team. High school and middle school PALs are linked with PALees who are either at the same school level (e.g., middle school PAL and middle school PALee), or at a lower level (e.g., high school PAL and middle school PALee). During regularly scheduled visits, PALs talk with their PALees about a variety of topics including self-esteem, substance use, decision making and relationships. They also provide tutoring as needed. In 1999-2000, there were 353 PALs and 1,378 PALees participating in the district. Ten high schools and seven middle schools offered PAL classes and served 21 elementary schools.

The goal of the PAL program is to help students have a more positive and productive school experience. To reach this goal, PAL students work towards achieving the following objectives:

- Provide both individual and group peer support;
- Help prevent students from dropping out of school;
- Help students make more informed and responsible decisions;
- Promote improved behavior and school attendance;
- Encourage improvement in academic performance; and
- Provide tutoring.

PAL students receive 20 hours of training per semester. Additionally, the first six weeks of the school year are devoted to classroom training with the PAL supervising teacher. The training includes a number of topics such as self-awareness, group dynamics, communication skills, helping strategies, problem solving, decision-making skills, tutoring skills, knowledge of school/community resources, conflict resolution, and substance abuse prevention. A substance abuse prevention curriculum was presented by invited guest speakers from the community and through the use of videotapes. During the course of the year, PALs also perform community service projects both in school and in the community. PALs work under the supervision of the PAL teacher and guidance counselors at their campus.

In 1999-2000 SDFSC funds supported the PAL program by providing the following:

- Stipends for campus staff participation;
- Salary for part-time program support staff;
- PAL program consultant fee to oversee program;
- Student transportation; and,
- Supplies, reading materials, reproduction, miscellaneous operating expenses and other program support.

Mentoring & PAL Program Implementation

Peer helping is based on two major premises. First, adolescents relate better to their peers than they do to authority figures and seek out peers when they have concerns. Second, adolescents who become skilled communicators can be effective in helping their peers express and deal with concerns (Canam, 1984). Students selected for the role of a PAL have demonstrated

leadership and a commitment and enthusiasm for contributing to the PAL program. The basis of PAL recruitment and selection is the nomination of qualified youth who demonstrate maturity and potential for being a role model. This is not restricted to high achievers or student leaders. PAL students contribute to the recruiting process by interviewing peers and explaining what they learned from the program to build expectations for membership. School guidance counselors and teachers select PALee students who are determined to be at-risk either academically or behaviorally. Often these same students become PALs in later years.

As a substance use prevention strategy, research has shown that allowing students to take an active role in prevention program delivery can strengthen the program itself and can boost the self-esteem and academic performance of the students who assist (Benard, 1990). This "peer leader" model has been used by student service professionals since the mid-1960's. Thus, youth participation in the PAL program has beneficial effects for both participants and leaders. The goal for PAL students is to provide a strong role model for other students, create a productive mentoring environment, and strengthen their own self-esteem through the PAL leadership experience they might not otherwise have. The goal for PALees is to have the peer/social influence that a PAL brings to the relationship which can strengthen the PALee's awareness of and resistance to external pressure (exerted by friends, family, and the media) and to internal pressures (such as low self-esteem) that can lead to drug use. Thus, the PAL program incorporates a prevention curriculum grounded in youth involvement and personal awareness that can prove successful with effective program implementation.

PAL Program Evaluation

The PAL program was evaluated through the feedback of PALs, PALees, and teachers. Methods of evaluation included activity reports, surveys, focus groups, interviews and written testimonials. In addition, student discipline records were examined. The overall program evaluation is highly positive with all respondents reporting beneficial results of PAL participation for both the PALs and the PALees (see Appendix H for a more detailed analysis).

Based on student activity reports, PALs and PALees spent the majority of their time discussing relationships, self-concept, decisions, behaviors and substance abuse. According to student survey results, both PALs and PALees made significant gains in the following areas: level of self-esteem, decision-making abilities, asking for help when needed, taking responsibility for actions, and handling conflict with peers, teacher and others. In fact, a marked impact on decision-making concerning drug use was reported: 87% of PALs and 91% of PALees stated that they were more knowledgeable about the importance of avoiding alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. Further, PALees described a favorable impression of their PALs as role models. PALs were viewed as being highly invested in the relationship and being capable of offering healthy advice and opinions concerning lifestyle.

In agreement with the student survey responses, teachers who were surveyed also reported highly positive effects of program participation for both PALs and PALees. The strongest improvement was noted in an increase of self-esteem and asking for help when needed.

PAL focus group results indicated significant gains in all skills and traits assessed. Most participants agreed that there were improvements in listening, communication, observing, problem solving, leadership, decision-making, learning, trust, self-esteem and perception. PALs also described positive behavioral, attitudinal and personality changes, increased interpersonal skills, and an array of personal rewards received. Overall, students felt that their PAL experience

was life-changing, and they recommended that the PAL program remain intact if not proliferate further in the district.

PAL Program Participants, 1996-97 to 1998-99, and 1999-2000

Students who had previously participated in the PAL program from 1996 through 1999, either as a PAL or PALee, were followed up in 1998-99 and 1999-2000 for discipline offenses. In each year, the overall discipline rate (number of students disciplined among all program participants) ranged between five percent and eight percent, lower than the district average (22% in 1998-99, 18% in 1999-2000). Of the small percentage of students that did have discipline offenses, the most common type of offense was for abusive conduct to other students.

When data for 1999-2000 PAL participants were examined, the 1999-2000 discipline rate was 6%, also lower than the district. These individuals will be followed up in 2000-2001 for any change in their discipline rate.

At a Glance:

SUPER I- INVEST & POSITIVE FAMILIES

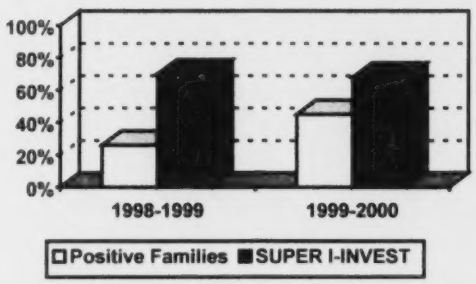
The SUPER I - INVEST and Positive Families programs are similar alternative education programs that intervene with AISD students who have offenses for substance use and violence on their home campuses. Placed in the Alternative Learning Center (ALC), students are referred to these specialized programs aimed at increasing protective factors. SUPER I - INVEST goals include stopping substance abuse among the targeted students, improving family communication skills, and promoting family involvement in support services. Positive Families goals are to improve student communication skills with other individuals (including family), improve anger management, and develop effective problem solving and positive conflict resolution methods. Target domains include:

- ✓ Individual

SUPER I - INVEST & Positive Families programs represent two similar intervention programs for substance use and violence. Findings include:

- **Most participants felt that they gained a better understanding of communication, anger management, and conflict resolution.**
- **Family, school and work relationships all improved as a result of program participation.**
- **After program completion, average discipline rates for program participants are lower than that of the district.**

Percent of Students Completing Programs



"It (INVEST) had a very positive impact on her (daughter). She became more open and vocal about her thoughts and feelings."
-99-00 Parent

"I could talk to him (father) more because he knew that he needed to listen to both sides of the story, not just his."
- 99-00 Student

Recommendations:

SUPER I - INVEST and Positive Families offer programming for families and students who are facing removal for substance use or violence offenses.

- Campuses with high removal rates should utilize Positive Families.
- Campuses should consider Positive Families as a short-term removal option.
- Select one coordinator to oversee implementation of both programs. Use only certified instructors.
- Follow up with students and families after completion of programs to ensure long-term effectiveness.
- If low enrollment continues to be a problem for Positive Families, other program options should be considered.

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SUPER I - INVEST AND POSITIVE FAMILIES

In school year 1999-2000, two alternative education programs, based at the Alternative Learning Center (ALC), were funded in part through Title IV. These programs served AISD middle and high school students who had been removed from their campuses and placed at the ALC for specific discipline offenses. During 1999-2000, 1,345 students were removed from their home campuses and placed at the ALC. This figure represents a reduction of 201 removal/placements from 1998-99. While at the ALC, students can be assigned to specialized alternative education programs in addition to classroom and behavioral instruction. These specialized programs serve to increase student protective factors in an effort to prevent future campus discipline referrals. A keystone of these programs is to require the participation of parents. By increasing communication, family support, problem-solving skills, anger management skills, and conflict resolution methods, students are better able to use healthy approaches to overcoming adversity, rather than turning to drugs or violence.

SUPER I - INVEST PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Program Descriptions

The Substance Use Prevention Education and Resources (SUPER I) program is a school-based curriculum program for middle and high school students referred for first-time drug possession discipline offenses. The program was offered in AISD from 1996 to the fall of 1999. Campuses were required to offer SUPER I during disciplinary hearings as a positive alternative to mandatory, long-term removals of students who had committed alcohol- or drug-related offenses for the first time (excluding offenses involving the sale or distribution of controlled substances). The Metropolitan Atlanta Council on Alcohol and Drugs (MACAD) developed the SUPER I program. With corporate assistance from Motorola, Inc. and in partnership with Lifeworks, SUPER I served referred students from all of AISD's middle and high schools the fall of 1999. Lifeworks provided some of the facilitators for SUPER I sessions.

INVEST (Involve Non-violent Values using Education, Self-control techniques and Trust) was created as a substitution for SUPER I in order to meet local needs and to reduce costs. The program was implemented for the first time in the spring of 2000. INVEST was used in the same way that SUPER I had been. Qualification for referral, curriculum, lessons, and content were similar to SUPER I. However, INVEST was developed and written by trained AISD staff to meet the specific needs of AISD students and campuses.

The programmatic goals for SUPER I-INVEST are as follows:

- Stopping short- and long-term substance abuse among the targeted students;
- Improving family communication skills;
- Promoting family involvement in support services.

The primary incentive for participation in SUPER I-INVEST is an abbreviated term of two weeks removal to the ALC, rather than the average removal of six weeks. The program agreement is that if the student and his or her parents (or other significant adult) complete the voluntary, four-session program, then arrangements may be made for the student to return to the home school. A more prompt return to the home school prevents erosion of the home-school bond, and it prevents students from falling behind on course credits earned.

The SUPER I-INVEST program was primarily funded by Title IV funds, which were used for facilitator pay for sessions occurring in the evening hours; program materials; and general program support (e.g., supplies, reproduction, snacks for parents and students).

Students and Families Served

During 1999-2000, 410 students were referred to the SUPER I-INVEST program and 281 (69%) of these students completed the program. Since a parent or other responsible adult must accompany each student from the household, the total number of participants enrolled was 820. Of this total number, 562 students and parents/adults completed the program. Some common reasons for non-completion of the program included the parent having a conflict with the class time due to work or home demands; emergencies; campus administrator or parent decision to not require program completion.

POSITIVE FAMILIES PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Program Description

Positive Families is a school-based curriculum program, developed by AISD staff for middle and high school students. This program is offered in AISD as an alternative to long-term removals of students who have committed disciplinary offenses categorized as persistent misbehavior. Positive Families was offered in AISD for the first time during the 1997-98 school year. The campus principal has the discretion of offering students Positive Families at the time of removal. Procedures for program operation are somewhat similar to the SUPER I-INVEST in that students and their parent or other significant adult must attend all four class sessions held in the evenings after the regular school/work day. The primary incentive for participation is an abbreviated term of two weeks removal from the home campus, as contrasted with the standard six weeks removal. If the student and a parent (or other significant adult) complete the voluntary, four-session program held at the ALC, then the student may be eligible to return to the home campus after only two weeks. This arrangement helps prevent students from falling behind on course credits.

With the intention of providing families new ways to approach daily conflicts, the programmatic goals for Positive Families are as follows:

- Improving communication skills with other individuals, especially family members;
- Improving anger management strategies;
- Learning positive conflict resolution methods;
- Developing effective problem-solving skills.

SDFSC funds also provided the primary source of support for the program and were used for curriculum development and facilitator training; extra-duty pay for facilitators to teach classes; program materials; and general program support (e.g., supplies, reproduction).

Students and Families Served

During 1999-2000, 68 students were referred to the Positive Families program and 31 (46%) of these students completed the program. Since a parent or other responsible adult must accompany each student, the total number of participants was 136. Of this total number, 62 students and parents/adults completed the program. Reasons for non-completion were similar to those described earlier for SUPER I-INVEST. However, the low enrollment and completion were

exacerbated by the fact that Positive Families was not a mandatory removal option for student discipline hearings.

SUPER I-INVEST and Positive Families Program Evaluation

The SUPER I-INVEST and Positive Families programs were evaluated through student records, surveys, and interview methods. Students, parents/guardians, staff and the program managers all participated in the evaluation. The results indicate that SUPER I-INVEST and Positive Families are considered effective substance use and violence intervention programs (see Appendix I for a more detailed analysis).

Overall, parents and students reported significant and immediate gains from participation in both programs. More than three-fourths of survey respondents stated that they gained a better understanding of communication, anger management and conflict resolution. Program participants specifically related these improvements to relationships within the family as well as school and work relationships.

Interview results confirmed the beneficial program impact. Respondents described being pleasantly surprised by the usefulness and supportive aspects of the programs. Those interviewed felt that they gained new perspective on others' feelings. Students who were previously non-communicative with the parents/guardians were able to open up as a result of program participation. Often this result occurred because families reported that this class offered the first opportunity to address student/family problems. Additionally, parents reported that program involvement served as a deterrent to further misbehavior among students, and that parents were more likely to seek additional assistance as a result of the experience. More details can be found in Appendix I.

Program manager/staff interviews for both programs indicated that program content is considered effective and program success is due to the interactive rather than didactic format used. Program staff offered several recommendations for improving the programs. For instance, a common observation made was that SUPER I-INVEST had increased enrollment while Positive Families was viewed as chronically underutilized. Staff suggested that low use of the Positive Families program might be due to the fact that some campuses prefer a more long-term removal for some students, or that the program is not consistently offered. A recommendation was made to make the program a mandatory offering in student discipline hearings. Program staff also recommended that to improve efficiency a coordinator be hired to manage both programs.

SUPER I and Positive Families Program Participants, 1996-97 to 1998-99

Students who had completed the SUPER I program from 1996-97 through 1998-99 were followed up for discipline offenses in 1999-2000. Overall, those students had an average discipline offense rate of nine percent in 1999-2000, lower than the district average (18%). Of those students with discipline offenses, the most common type of offense was for substance possession.

Students who had completed the Positive Families program in previous years (1997-98 to 1998-99) were followed up for discipline offenses in 1999-2000. Overall, those students had an average discipline offense rate of 13%, somewhat lower than the district average (18%). However, the numbers were very small in this analysis with only 3 students of 25 having discipline offenses. Of those three students with discipline offenses, the offenses were abusive conduct to other students, tobacco possession, and "other".

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL-LEVEL TITLE IV CAMPUS INITIATIVES

INTRODUCTION

Title IV campus-level activities are designed to encourage schools to address SDFSC issues that are most salient to the campuses. Thus, school staff is given the latitude to initiate and implement innovative programs and activities that support an enhanced learning environment free from drugs and violence. All AISD campuses and those Austin-area private nonprofit schools and neglected or delinquent facilities that are within AISD boundaries are eligible to receive Title IV funds on a per-pupil basis.

CAMPUS ALLOCATIONS

For the 1999-2000 school year, approximately $359,297 was allocated for all campuses (both AISD public and participating Austin-area nonpublic schools) and distributed to campuses on a $4.00 per student basis. This amount was based on several factors, including the total grant amount, funds required to provide support to district-level programs, and the total number of students and campuses participating in the grant.

CAMPUS PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Grant guidelines and planning-budget forms to apply for Title IV funds were sent to each campus principal in the fall semester. A campus staff member was appointed at each school to act as a point of contact for SDFSC and to help develop and implement the campus plan. Applications for SDFSC funds were reviewed to verify that each campus' proposed program plans and expenditures were aligned with Title IV grant goals, the Principles of Effectiveness, and the campus improvement plan (CIP). Once plans were approved, the funds were made available to campuses for spending on their activities.

CAMPUS EVALUATION

The grant year was July 1 to June 30. With AISD finance requirements encouraging timely use of funds, and with the work of campus contacts and their area school support staff, the AISD campuses and Austin-area nonpublic schools were able to expend 78% of their allocated funds (about $280,146). This represents an improvement in spending over the past several years (e.g., 74% in 1998-99; 77% in 1997-98). In cases where funds were not spent, there were usually reasons such as a scheduled event or speaker was cancelled, orders for materials or resources were cancelled due to slow processing of paperwork in the district's finance office, or as a result of campus staff turnover the original SDFSC campus plans were abandoned or lost.

At the end of the school year, schools that had spent any Title IV funds for campus-based activities were evaluated. Schools reported the following types of information:

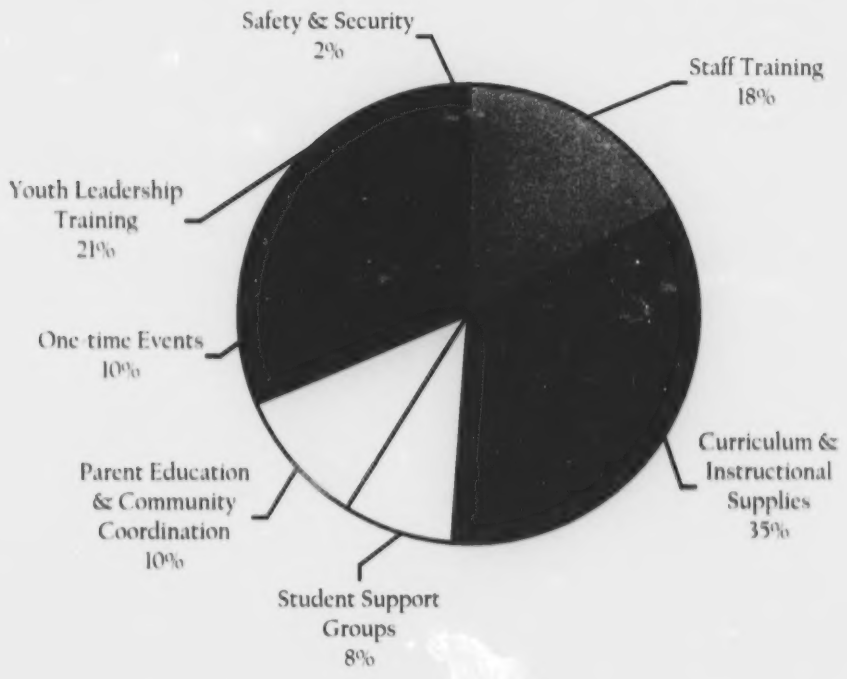
- Activities or purchases completed;
- Students, staff, parents, and community members involved;
- Evaluation methods used to assess the effectiveness of each activity;
- Impact of each activity based upon results of campus evaluations;
- Whether or not campus staff would recommend activities to other campuses;
- Successes in implementing their activities; and,

- Difficulties or concerns in implementing their activities.

Campus Expenditures

Figure 17 depicts the distribution of campus expenditures. The largest percentage of campus expenditures went toward the purchase of curriculum materials and supplies used to supplement classroom instruction or other student training (e.g., conflict resolution) (35%). Youth leadership training was the next largest category of campus expenditures (21%). Many campus expenditures also consisted of staff training (18%), parent education and community coordination (10%), and one-time events (e.g., assemblies, presentations) (10%). Thus, the majority of campuses focused their Title IV activities on students. However, campuses also used their Title IV funds to benefit and involve staff, parents, and community members.

Figure 17: 1999-2000 Title IV Campus Expenditures by Category



Source: SDFSC Program Records

Impact of Campus Activities

When asked to describe the methods of assessment and evaluation that they used to monitor their own Title IV activities, most campuses reported using class discussion and/or teacher observation; pre- and post-tests and surveys; school records (e.g., discipline, attendance, TAAS); attendance rosters for events; students' written essays.

The overall impact of most campus programs and activities that were implemented during 1999-2000 were described as positive. Many campuses reported lower number/rate of student discipline offenses; increased participation by students, parents, and community members; beneficial staff training; and increased student knowledge about certain topics (e.g., responsible

decision making, the dangers of drugs, alternatives to violence). Many campuses reported a variety of activities and strategies focused on the health and wellness of their campus community (students, parents, staff, community members). Since each campus has site-based decision making, each campus had their own unique approach to the incorporation of Title IV goals and activities into their overall campus goals. For the purpose of illustrating some ways in which campuses accomplished this, three campus examples are presented in the next few pages in the "At a Glance" format. The examples were chosen to illustrate one campus at each school level in the district: elementary, middle, high. However, these illustrations are not meant to be representative of the wide variety of campus uses of Title IV funds.

Some campuses experienced some difficulties in trying to implement or complete their Title IV campus activities. In reviewing campus contact responses, some of these problems were systemic:

- The paperwork, rules and regulations required by the grant and by the AISD financial system were great and very complex.
- The time taken to access and use funds often took too long for a successful implementation or completion of activities, especially given the grant and district financial spending deadlines.

The information feedback provided by campuses was used in several ways beyond the summary provided in this chapter. Overall results were incorporated into the district's required evaluation report to the Texas Education Agency in terms of numbers served by grant funds and by the amounts of funds expended per activity/service. The campus evaluations provided evidence that campuses were able to follow their original plans to meet grant goals. Area school support staffs were provided summaries of the campus evaluations for their analysis and reference. Suggestions from the evaluations were used in planning for the 2000-2001 year, including preparing for a campus workshop and resource fair held in August 2000. The intent of the workshop and resource fair was to start the campuses off early in the school year with all the necessary guidelines, instructions, and potential resources available so that campus staff could prepare the best possible campus plans for use of Title IV funds.

At a Glance:

AN AISD HIGH SCHOOL

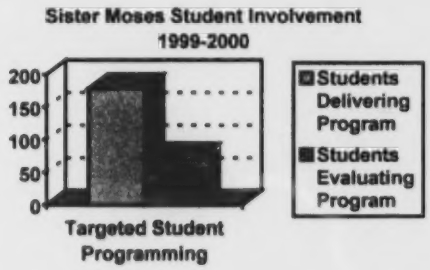
One AISD high school conducted a Sister Moses Project, a musical drama production put on by a student Black cultural awareness council that is a multidisciplinary theatre piece detailing the life and struggles of Harriet Tubman. Students completed study guides, interviewed with the press, gave local performances, and participated in ongoing discussion centered on issues of freedom, individual responsibility, and peaceful social action. By helping students develop performance skills, leadership, and self-confidence, activities like the Sister Moses Project address the importance of developing protective factors. Target domains for this project include:

- ✓ Individual
- ✓ School
- ✓ Peer Groups

Cultural diversity programming is one way that high schools can involve students in reinforcing acceptance and appreciation for

Each AISD school is allocated Title IV funds based on per pupil attendance. Through collaborative planning, teachers, counselors and students at one high school developed programming unique to their campus. Positive activities for this campus included the following:

- Art, dance and poetry were used to help students develop critical thinking and writing skills.
- Psycho-educational drug and alcohol relapse prevention groups met regularly.
- A cultural mural project was conducted for students to express resolution of urban conflict through art



"100% of the students stated that they felt better about themselves in terms of thinking they are good problem solvers, and in finding new ways to have fun and be with people."

- Sister Moses Program administrator

"The staff learned new ways to meet and greet students daily, as well as practiced ways of facilitating discussions with students."

-Student

Recommendations:

Students need to be engaged in campus activity programming. As a result, they become interested and enthusiastic about contributing their positive skills and creativity to solving issues and building a school's sense of community. Title IV campus funds can be utilized to empower and engage students in developing relationships that will help prevent violence and substance abuse.

Every effort should be made to empower students to design, implement and evaluate the prevention efforts in their school and community.

At a Glance:

AN AISD MIDDLE SCHOOL

Through a student needs survey, one AISD middle school identified students who wanted to participate in various support groups. The groups formed around the specific topics that were indicated in the surveys. For example, several students indicated that they wanted to participate in an anger management group, and other students indicated the need for a grief group since they had lost a parent or sibling in the last two years. Targeted programming around stated needs of youth is one successful way of encouraging students to deal with anger, grief, and negative feelings that may result in negative self-image and disruptive behavior.

Target domains include:

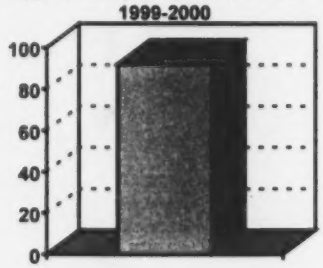
- ✓ Individual
- ✓ Peer Group
- ✓ School

The direct result of these groups includes better attendance and decreases in discipline

Student programming at one AISD middle school included the following activities in their Title IV planning:

- Student Support Groups aimed at substance abuse, self-esteem, decision making, grief/loss and behavior management.
- Youth leadership training for members of support groups to aid group cohesion and build positive relationships.
- Mentor programming started by one parent resulted in more than 50 volunteers mentoring students.

Support Group Student Involvement 1999-2000



"Girls in the self-esteem group had a successful spring semester. Three of them experienced significant losses, but were encouraged to keep coming to school. Two may have to attend summer school for academic concerns, but all will be promoted to ninth grade."

"The students in the grief group finished the year with a trip where they planted flowers in memory of their love one. Each one seemed to gain confidence and support as they shared their grieving process with peers."

-Campus Program Staff

Recommendations:

Adolescent youth benefit from support in the form of developing positive peer relationships and increased trust with adults. Having adult mentors is an effective way of allowing students to be heard and develop self-confidence. Student programming that addresses issues that are important to youth engage them and provide a support for developing protective factors.

A multifaceted campus program that includes students, staff and parents will communicate to all campus and community members that there is a common goal among the many efforts to promote student success.

At a Glance:

AN AISD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Programs for youth in elementary schools most often involve building youth protective factors that can help prevent future substance abuse and violent misbehavior. One AISD elementary school implemented a peer mediation process. Mediations occurred for students who were referred by themselves, teachers, parents, and/or administrators. In 1999-2000, seven mediations were conducted. One mediation was repeated at a student's request to reach a new agreement. Survey results indicate that the mediators learned conflict resolution skills, and that the program should be continued. Many student mediators indicated that they wanted to be mediators in middle school.

Target domains for this program include:

- ✓ Individual
- ✓ Peer Groups
- ✓ Family
- ✓ School
- ✓ Community

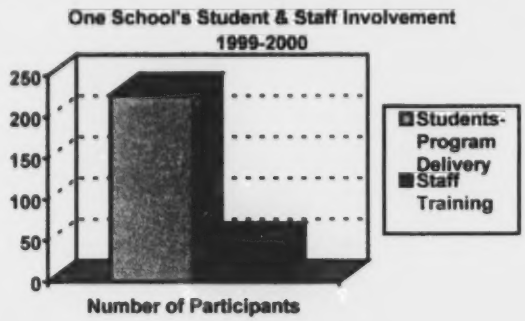
Several programs at one AISD elementary school were implemented with Title IV funds including:

- Peer mediation training for select fifth graders,
- Character education material for teachers,
- Fifth grade student leadership and cooperative group skills training. After a leadership camp, they shared these skills with younger students by facilitating camp activities. All fifth graders took leadership roles in teaching the younger students new skills.

"We were very successful in starting a peer mediation program at our school. Being able to use some of the money for substitutes enabled us to involve more teachers in this program. "

"The student team-building activities were very successful. Especially beneficial was the training done by the fifth graders for the younger students. "

-Campus program staff



Recommendations:

Title IV funds for elementary schools often focus on strengthening protective factors that will act to prevent or reduce the likelihood of future behavior problems. These efforts can focus on basic skills such as resistance to peer pressure, improving decision-making, learning conflict resolution and problem solving, and strengthening self-esteem and empathy for others.

Students, parents, and staff should all be involved and should be communicating the same message when it comes to topics such as substance abuse and violence. By focusing on children's strengths and resilience, the capacity for growth and success can be reinforced. Prevention efforts must be consistent and long-term, spanning all

CHAPTER 6: AISD TITLE IV CURRICULUM AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

OVERVIEW

Allocations to curriculum and district staff training were approximately $214,342, of which about $169,615 was spent (79%). The Title IV SDFSC grant supported curriculum and staff development in the district to:

- Provide age-appropriate instruction to students covering the areas of drug and violence education by integrating drug and violence prevention curriculum with other core curricula in the district;
- Assist campuses in obtaining research-based prevention curriculum materials, programs, and other resources; and,
- Provide in-service training to teachers, counselors and other district staff members on making the best use of prevention resources.

In-service training funded in part by Title IV was provided at the district level during 1999-2000 and served over 570 staff members from the campuses and from district offices. Training records provided by the district's Professional Development Academy indicate some of the relevant course offerings and attendance as presented in Table 6. This course listing is not inclusive of all staff training that occurred in AISD since many professional development opportunities were held either at the campuses or outside of AISD (e.g., at conferences).

Table 6: District-level Title IV Supported Staff Training by Curriculum Area, 1999-2000

Curriculum Area	Course Name - Topic	# of Staff Attending*
Guidance and Counseling	• 2001: A Counseling Odyssey	105
	• Suicide & Trauma	166
	• Why Are Kids So Angry?	203
Health and Safety	• Here's Looking at You (Trainer of Trainers)	9
	• Project ALERT (2 sessions)	39
	• Making Healthy Choices (2 sessions)	48

* Attendance numbers may be underestimated since not all attending may have filled out a form.
Source: AISD PDA Records, AISD SDFSC Program Records

SCIENCE AND HEALTH CURRICULUM

PROJECT ALERT

Project ALERT (1997) is a research-based, age-appropriate substance abuse prevention curriculum aimed at the middle school population; it has been shown to be associated with reduced initial experimentation as well as reduced usage for those teenagers already using substances (Best, 2000). *Project ALERT* contains eleven lessons in its initial year of instruction that focus on alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and inhalants. *Project ALERT*'s focus is on motivating youth to not use substances, to learn to recognize pressures to use drugs, and to develop and practice

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skills to resist these pressures. The program incorporates homework assignments that involve student-parent discussions about class topics to encourage parent involvement.

The *Project ALERT* program was begun in AISD during 1999-2000 by offering initial staff training and curriculum kits to all middle schools. Thirty-nine staff representing 14 middle schools and two elementary schools completed the initial training. However, not all middle schools had sent representatives for training by the end of the year. Furthermore, since training occurred late in the school year, not all those participating schools were able to implement the program through classroom instruction prior to the end of the school year. Therefore, more training opportunities are planned for the 2000-2001 school year, including follow up with those staff previously trained. In addition, to assess the impact of *Project ALERT* on students, those student groups who received instruction in *Project ALERT* (approximately 287 students) will be tracked in subsequent years using various aggregate district data, such as discipline, attendance, and academic progress. Coordination with the district's middle school prevention and safety coordinators and other area representatives will help ensure that all middle school staff members are contacted and supported for the successful implementation of the curriculum. The ultimate goal is to have *Project ALERT* infused into the core curriculum at all middle schools and at those elementary schools with sixth grades.

Making Healthy Choices

Making Healthy Choices (1991, 1995) is the current, AISD Board mandated, comprehensive health curriculum for grades prekindergarten through twelve in AISD that addresses prevention topics such as drugs, violence, and sexuality. Awareness, responsible decision-making and abstinence are the cornerstones of prevention in this curriculum in order to reduce risky behaviors and attitudes among youth.

Frequent annual training is available to staff at all grade levels. Supplemental resources are available and are updated frequently for content and relevance. Annually, a campus contact and plan of curriculum implementation are identified for every school. Each campus must follow procedures to ensure that the curriculum materials are made available for review by all parents. In addition, parents may opt their child out of certain classroom sessions based on certain topics. Classroom instruction is prescribed for teachers in order to ensure that topics covered in class adhere to the state-mandated Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) (see www.tea.state.tx.us/teks/), and that lessons are age-appropriate and address each of the curriculum components for healthy child and adolescent development. For 1999-2000, $1,960 of Title IV funds were spent on teacher stipends to attend training.

Here's Looking at You

Here's Looking at You (HLAY) (1999) is a widely-used drug prevention and character education curriculum for grades kindergarten through twelve, and it is consistent with the U. S. Department of Education's *Principles of Effectiveness*. The program is based on national research in the areas of drug prevention and educational strategies, contains clear goals and objectives, and has tools for evaluation.

In order to promote healthy attitudes and behaviors, the general goals of the lessons are to provide current and accurate information to students, teach positive social skills, and provide opportunities for students to bond with their school, family and community. Within these broad goals are more specific activities that encourage students to:

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- Identify drugs and their harmful effects;
- Examine sources of influence and identify helpful resources in their school and community;
- Acquire skills in getting along with others, staying out of trouble, making effective decisions, and keeping friends;
- Identify problems and ways to cope;
- Appreciate strengths in self and others;
- Discover safe, healthy and legal ways to have fun within the community.

In AISD, a pilot project was conducted by a central staff member in one class of third grade students at one elementary school using *HLAY* (McIlroy, 2000). Staff training occurred, and all necessary instructional materials were provided to campus staff. The curriculum was integrated into the regular curricula in the classroom over an eight-week period. The following measures and procedures were used throughout the project: pre- and post-tests to assess changes in students' knowledge and self-concept; and site visits for observations, focus groups, and interviews with students and staff.

Although only one classroom of third graders at one elementary school received instruction in *HLAY*, results obtained in this research project may serve as guidelines or benchmarks for future use of the curriculum. For student participants, there was an increase in the average self-esteem score and in the average knowledge score between the pre- and the post-curriculum assessment (due to low number of participants, tests of significance were not carried out). All qualitative data indicated that students understood that drugs were harmful, and most felt that their decision-making skills had improved following the eight weeks of instruction. The teacher interviewed gave the program very positive reviews in terms of ease of use and the positive impact on students' behaviors and attitudes. The teacher recommended that *HLAY* be used as a supplementary curriculum to complement the current AISD health education curriculum, *Making Healthy Choices* (1995).

DAVE: Drug and Violence Education

The *Texas Prevention Curriculum Guide: Drug and Violence Education* (*DAVE*, 1997) is TEA's recommended drug and violence prevention guide for all Texas school districts, developed and updated from a previous state curriculum guide, *Education for Self-Responsibility II: Prevention of Drug Use*. The guide provides a way for all teachers to promote safe and drug-free schools by integrating research-based prevention education into core curriculum areas of the school district. The guide is available (see http://www.esc4.net/dave/) as a searchable database enabling educators to search for and retrieve lesson plans across all major curriculum areas (e.g., language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, physical education, etc.) and grade levels (prekindergarten to twelfth grades).

The *DAVE* curriculum is appropriate for use by counselors as well as teaching staff. In particular, the curriculum staff in science and health as well as in guidance and counseling encouraged the use of *DAVE*. Professional development in *DAVE* was offered several times during the year. Every campus was provided with a complete copy of the *DAVE* curriculum. Appropriate campus staff members were made aware of the materials and how to integrate them into the classroom. Instructional coordinators and program specialists provided assistance to campuses through site visits, advisement, and training opportunities to help campus staff align the Title IV supported goals and materials with core academic curricula.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING CURRICULUM

During the 1999-2000 school year, the Title IV grant provided support to the district s guidance and counseling program in several areas. For example, as part of staff development for all counselors and other invited staff, invited speakers made special presentations on grief and loss, trauma reduction, and anger in children. In addition there was a concerted effort to make implementation of the guidance and counseling curriculum, *Live This!* (1998), uniform across the district. Several methods were used to accomplish this:

- Training on how to plan counselor time and effort aimed at efficient use of counselor time by focusing on an 'inverted pyramid' of service to enable services to a majority of students;
- Training on availability/use of curriculum guidelines and supplemental resources;
- On campus, personalized training for new counselors, provided by two program specialists (funded through the grant);
- Needs assessment conducted on every campus to set priorities for year-long campus planning of guidance and counseling curriculum and student support activities;
- Evaluation and revision of guidance and counseling activities on campuses;
- Alignment of *Live This!* curriculum goals and activities with the Title IV grant campus goals and activities, as outlined in campus plans;
- Regular meetings of counselor leadership teams, representing all levels of counselors in the district, to discuss important issues and disseminate information efficiently to all campuses; and,
- Identification of minimum requirements for implementation of the *Live This!* curriculum to be adopted for the 2000-2001 school year.

Several resources were added to the *Live This!* curriculum, including correlation with the state TEKS, and some supplemental information such as specific assessment tools for evaluating each curriculum lesson, methods of prioritizing campus goals based on needs assessment, and recommendations for organizing campus agreements with administration on the yearly guidance and counseling plan. Title IV funding was used to develop and produce a counselor *CRISIS* manual (1999), a guidebook for counselors to use in responding to specific problems as they arise on campus. The manual identifies community resources and agencies that address a wide variety of student problems. In addition, the manual contains information on crisis response procedures, template forms for different sets of circumstances, and in-depth descriptions of methods for working with students on specific topics such as grief, death, suicide, drugs, abuse, and so forth.

Most often, the counselor is the individual at the campus level who is responsible for planning, implementing and evaluating the use of campus-based Title IV SDFSC funds. However, this responsibility is generally added to the counselor's other duties. Therefore, in terms of effectiveness of the use of Title IV funds, the counselor should coordinate with other campus staff, be familiar with the *Live This!* curriculum, and see the Title IV funds as an integral part of this system. Since the Title IV SDFSC grant has emphasized the Principles of Effectiveness in the past two years at both the district and campus level, a similar focus on planning, needs assessment, prioritization of goals, implementation, and evaluation within guidance and counseling has helped bring the ultimate goals, outcomes, and accountability of these two areas much more in line.

CHAPTER 7: AISD TITLE IV SUPPORT STAFF AND SERVICES

At a Glance:

TEAM APPROACH

Over the past several years, the Title IV grant program in AISD has benefited from a team approach. Individuals from across the district and from the community have worked together to guide the program. Their work has contributed to the development and success of the program. Among AISD staff, representatives from the following district and campus organizations have been team members in guiding Title IV over the past five years:

- ✓ Grant development,
- ✓ Curriculum,
- ✓ Campus counselors,
- ✓ Program evaluation,
- ✓ Alternative education programs,
- ✓ School support,
- ✓ Family and parent support,
- ✓ Campus police.

With the team approach, the grant has had improved communication across organizational areas of the district, including more opportunities for two-way communication between campus and district staffs. Large-scale tasks, such as a district-wide campus workshop for over 100 campuses, have been successful. The team approach also allows for cross-department planning and coordination of goals, objectives, and activities. An example has been the progress made with campuses' plans for use of Title IV funds. The Title IV program managers, district curriculum staff, school support staff, grant staff, and evaluation staff have joined efforts to guide campus planning for Title IV activities. As a result campus staffs have clear options for how best to use those funds in ways that are appropriate to their campus improvement plans and are allowable under grant requirements. This effort has led to more efficient use of funds that the district receives. The remainder of this chapter will outline some of the key staffs that worked with the Title IV

"Helping students make sound decisions, in a safe school environment, is a large responsibility that requires a collaborative effort. Teachers, administrators, counselors, and other school staff must work together, in partnership, with parents, community members and local agencies and businesses so all students can reach this goal."

- Stan Brein

Recommendations:

Collaboration in managing and implementing districtwide grants offers a useful model for reaching all students with grant-funded activities. Continued use of the following will enable future success in AISD:

- Alignment of Campus Improvement Plan and Title IV planning;
- Continue resource fairs and grant management support of campus planning and implementation;
- Combinations of grants that target similar student groups for a comprehensive approach to addressing protective factors

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GRANT MANAGER AND BUDGET SPECIALIST

Grant funds partially supported the salary of a grant manager (50%) and a budget specialist (75%) during 1999-2000. For the fall semester, the administrative supervisor for science and health curricula held the grant manager position, and no grant funds were used to support this person's salary. However, this person took another job outside of the district, and the management of the Title IV grant as well as other grants in the district was brought under the direction of a grant office team. A new grant manager, whose salary was partially funded through Title IV, began coordination of the grant for the spring semester. The grant manager's responsibilities throughout the year included the following:

- Approving Title IV campus and program expenditures;
- Maintaining communication with federal and state entities to ensure district program compliance with grant regulations;
- Monitoring the planning and implementation of all grant activities and initiatives;
- Informing the district's SDFSC Advisory Council of all relevant grant information;
- Maintaining contact with all relevant district program staff with regards to the grant.

The budget specialist managed accounting procedures associated with grant funds and helped provide detailed information on allocations and expenditures for district Title IV programs and campus Title IV activities. The budget specialist handled all processing of requests for Title IV funds and expenditures.

EVALUATORS

Two evaluators (one fully funded by Title IV, 100%, and the other partially funded by the grant, 65%) provided evaluation to all of the Title IV programs and activities in the district. These individuals worked with district and campus staff to analyze needs, plan and evaluate Title IV funded activities. In addition, the evaluators were responsible for gathering data from those private schools and neglected or delinquent facilities within the AISD boundaries that received Title IV funding. In order to provide the most comprehensive evaluation, the evaluators:

- Provided technical assistance in planning, needs assessment, and evaluation to campus contacts and district program managers;
- Reviewed and critiqued campus plans for use of Title IV funds;
- Collected and analyzed evaluation data from campuses and district Title IV programs;
- Worked with the grant manager to ensure district and campus compliance with federal and state mandates of the grant;
- Coordinated, distributed, and analyzed results of the annual districtwide student and staff surveys;
- Met with district stakeholders, including students and staff, to plan, inform, update, and evaluate various components of the grant;
- Presented evaluation information to the district's SDFSC Advisory Council and to other community groups upon request;
- Conducted research on local, state, and nationally-recognized programs as well as trends in drug use and violence;

- Provided staff training and advice in evaluation methods and results;
- Prepared and distributed the required annual TEA Title IV evaluation report as well as the annual AISD narrative report for the Title IV program in the district;
- Worked with other district staff and community members in writing the evaluation components of several successful grant proposals submitted to state and federal agencies.

School Support and Community Specialists

Five School Support Community Specialists (SSCSs) were instrumental in providing guidance and monitoring of campus-based Title IV activities. Their salaries were supported 100% by Title IV funds. Each of the SSCSs, assigned to a particular organizational area of the district's schools, was responsible for approximately 20 campuses. The SSCSs helped their campus Title IV contacts to develop and approve their campus plans for use of Title IV funds. SSCSs also were critical in assisting campuses with the implementation and evaluation of campus Title IV funded programs. The SSCSs were the first point of contact for campuses when questions or concerns arose concerning Title IV funds and activities.

In addition to supporting campuses with Title IV, the SSCSs had other responsibilities in the district:

- Campus site visits, area principals' meetings, updates to area superintendents;
- Attendance and dropout recovery, and other duties as assigned;
- Monitoring, intervention, and follow up on campus safety and crisis management plans;
- Student discipline management plans, mediation, problem solving, and training;
- Serving on district teams and attending relevant meetings, including the district's SDFSC Advisory Council;
- Attending or presenting at district workshops, including presentations to students, staff and parents.

Instructional Coordinators

Assistance was provided to district and campus staff through two science/health instructional coordinators from the Department of Curriculum (salaries partially funded through Title IV, one at 45%, the other at 50%). These instructional coordinators assisted schools in aligning the goals of science and health curricula with the goals of the SDFSC program. For instance, these coordinators made campus visits and gave advice to campus personnel on the availability of prevention curriculum resources and supplemental materials that bridged both science/health and SDFSC prevention topics for instruction. Campus staff members were encouraged to align their campus curriculum plans for science and health with their Title IV plans. One of the instructional coordinators organized staff training for *Project ALERT* (a middle school drug prevention curriculum) and co-chaired the district's SDFSC Advisory Council.

Campus-based Drug Counselors

For the 1999-2000 school year, two full-time drug prevention counselors were fully funded through the grant at two campuses: Alternative Learning Center and Garza Independence

High School. The grant provided direct funding for the counselors to support students attending those schools who may be experiencing substance abuse problems or who are at risk for doing so. Due to the differences in the two schools, the activities of each of the counselors will be discussed separately. These descriptions are provided based on information gained from interviews.

Alternative Learning Center Counselor

AISD's Alternative Learning Center (ALC) is a campus for middle and high school students who have been removed from their regular campus for discipline violations. The typical stay for students at the ALC is between three days and six weeks. The drug prevention counselor at ALC was involved in several different activities in the first year of this position. The counselor conducted classroom presentations to students on drugs and alcohol, combining lecture, guest speakers, and opportunities for student discussion.

The counselor also conducted parent interviews as part of the ALC student enrollment or intake process in order to get to know the parents and gain some knowledge of student and family needs. The counselor conducted weekly student groups on topics such as self-esteem, drug education, home and classroom problems, and crisis counseling. When assessments or referrals to outside resources were necessary (e.g., for drug use, counseling needs, etc.), the counselor helped families make such arrangements.

On a limited basis, the drug prevention counselor worked in transitioning ALC students back to their home campuses. Due to time constraints during the school year, the drug counselor reported not being able to do very much transition follow up as had been planned. When follow up occurred, it would consist of looking at students' class schedules, talking with staff about student adjustments, offering students mini-counseling sessions to discuss current problems and provide helpful behavioral strategies, and meeting with parents. The transition follow up is one area that the drug prevention counselor would like to expand in the next school year.

Garza High School Counselor

Garza Independence High School, with an open enrollment policy and flexible class scheduling, provides an alternative high school setting to students in AISD. The campus program is geared to students who feel that they do not fit in at other local campuses. Students must apply to be accepted for enrollment at Garza. The supportive environment at Garza, focused on academics, has been described as more personal and conducive to building relationships because of the low teacher-student ratio. Individuality and acceptance among students, staff and administration are encouraged in this small school-community. The typical student at Garza is 15 or 16 years of age, on grade level, but at risk for dropping out for some reason (e.g., teen parent, drug use, personal or family problems, and so forth).

The drug prevention counselor is one of three counselors that serve the student population at Garza. Each counselor handles a similar caseload of students for advisement in studies and personal counseling when needed. Those students who are at risk for drug use are referred to the drug prevention counselor. In the drug prevention counselor's first year at Garza, several activities were initiated. A needs assessment was done of student issues at the beginning of the school year, and a shortened needs assessment was developed for new students who continued to enroll throughout the year. This needs assessment provided a means for identifying students who may be at risk for substance abuse. The drug prevention counselor also set up student support groups that helped to build a trusting relationship between the counselor and

students. The groups also allowed students to talk with each other about troubling issues in a controlled, safe environment. When necessary, the drug prevention counselor would make student referrals to outside agencies or therapists for those students who had more serious drug use issues. On a schoolwide basis, the drug prevention counselor developed and sent out a school newsletter to all students and faculty. Finally, the counselor did a year-end student survey of all Garza students to find out about students' self reported knowledge and use of drugs, and whether they had family members who used drugs.

Next year, the counselor would like to expand services to students at Garza by including activities such as classroom presentations on specific topics related to drug use, risk and resiliency, and coping. The counselor would like to initiate a support group for children of alcoholics based on identified need. The principal would like to see other services added to complement what is already offered at Garza. For instance, one service proposed is a student support group for those who have experienced a loss of a family member or friend. A second service proposed is the development of a school IMPACT team, as is being proposed districtwide. The principal and others are in contact with city and county agencies for the possibility of developing a referral network between school and city/county service agencies.

CHAPTER 8: DISTRICT & COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS

SDFSC Advisory Council

The Title IV grant requires that school districts receiving grant funds establish and consult with a local advisory council. This council should be representative of the school district and the community in which it is located, including some of the following individuals: parents, students, school district staff, and members of local government, business, law enforcement, medicine, private schools, community organizations, state agencies, and other groups interested in prevention. The duties of the school district's SDFSC advisory council are to:

- Consult with the district in the development of its annual grant application;
- Disseminate information about drug and violence prevention programs and activities within the school district's boundaries;
- Advise the school district on how best to coordinate Title IV activities with other related programs and activities; and
- Review program evaluations and other relevant materials to make recommendations to the school district on how to improve prevention programs.

During 1999-2000, the AISD SDFSC Advisory Council met monthly. The group consisted of school district and community members representing a variety of organizations. Some of the community agencies that had frequent collaborations with schools and staff in AISD are described briefly in the remainder of this chapter. In many cases, without the collaboration of community organizations, campuses would not have been able to serve as many students as possible with their Title IV funds.

Coordination of Title IV, Title I, and Other Grant Programs

In order to make the best use of funds, school districts that receive grant funds are required by federal and state laws to coordinate grant funds and activities with local funds and activities (see TEA's standard application system grant assurances and provisions #6E online at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.support/). There are several grant-funded and local-funded initiatives in AISD where Title IV has potential overlap. For instance, Title I is a compensatory education program with the purpose of providing opportunity for all children to meet state performance standards. Qualification for campus inclusion in Title I is based on percent of low-income students on the campus. Though the services offered at Title I schoolwide program campuses are varied, ranging from summer programs to after school tutoring, the goal is to support at-risk children with as much supplementary support as necessary for school success. With this goal in mind, there are areas that Title IV and I have in common. These collaboration areas include improved student achievement, student involvement, early intervention, parent involvement, teacher involvement, and professional development for teachers. Account for Learning, a local district initiative to improve learning among economically-disadvantaged students, also focused on the importance of parent involvement during 1999-2000.

Both Titles I and IV seek to improve children's achievement. Title IV supports the creation of a safe and drug-free environment that allows learning while Title I focuses on instructional strategies that promote learning. Title IV also supports improved instruction

through the use of supplemental prevention curriculum resources and effective teaching strategies. In order to maximize effectiveness, Titles I and IV both aim for early intervention to enhance students' success in school.

These grants also encourage increased parental involvement as a means to improving student's well being. Parents are an essential influence on the education of children, through both academic and social development. The grants include long-term parental involvement planning at the campus and district levels, efforts to seek parental input, parent training, and parent participation in prevention/intervention programs. A number of campuses that received Title I or Account for Learning grant funds during 1999-2000 supported a parent education liaison staff member to encourage parent and community involvement in those schools. Family literacy training and AISD's Family Resource Center also were essential components of parental involvement and support in the district during 1999-2000. [See Curry, Washington & Zyskowski, 2000, for more information on AISD's 1999-2000 Title I program]

Teacher involvement and training also is a lynchpin of program development and implementation in many grants. Grants often rely on teacher feedback for the development and revision of funded programs. In accordance with the importance of teacher involvement, grants also provide ample opportunity for teacher professional development. In the area of staff development, Title II (Eisenhower) also can have some common ground with grants such as Titles I and IV. Title II focuses primarily on staff development in the areas of science and mathematics. When science professional development focuses on topics of health and function of the human body, then there is room to address the impact of chemical substances, including those found in tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drugs. Other curriculum areas (e.g., physical education, language arts, social studies, health, guidance/counseling) also can cover topics important to Title IV goals, which is the premise of the state-supported *DAVE* prevention curriculum.

MIDDLE SCHOOL COORDINATORS GRANT

AISD was awarded a federal competitive grant in 1999 from the U. S. Department of Education's Safe and Drug-Free Schools program to support hiring five middle school drug prevention and safety coordinators for a three-year period. Starting in January 2000, these five individuals were placed at five middle schools with relatively high student discipline rates (one middle school per organizational area). The role of these individuals is to coordinate prevention and intervention resources within the district and in the community and bring these resources to the schools. Based on specific identified needs of the campuses, appropriate prevention or intervention resources were matched to the school's students, families and staff. By the end of the third year of the grant, these five individuals will be working with all AISD middle schools. The ultimate goal of the grant is to reduce student discipline rates, especially in terms of substance use and violence. The means to this goal is building up the capacity of the middle schools to prevent student discipline problems and to enable students to be more successful in school. The middle school coordinators are in communication and work in cooperation with other district staff associated with the Title IV grant. During 1999-2000, these coordinators worked with their campuses to help plan, implement and evaluate Title IV activities. In addition, they sought community prevention resources to bring to campuses. These individuals also were instrumental in the campus workshop and resource fair held at the beginning of the 2000-01 school year to help campuses prepare for their Title IV planning.

Other Collaborations Within AISD

School Support Staff

There are numerous AISD staff members that support all of the schools in meeting the needs of their students and families. Some of these include parent educators and visiting teachers. Parent educators or parent training specialists are located at many campuses in the district that receive Title I and/or Account for Learning funds. These individuals support all campus efforts to encourage parent involvement as well as provide parent training on specific topics. The parent training topics include family literacy, student academic and family health issues, and discipline and communication.

The visiting teachers provide a variety of student and family support services, often working in cooperation with campus and district staff who support Title IV programming. These individuals, often in the role of caseworkers, help ensure that student needs (e.g., medical, social, academic) are met, and they are often present when students have academic or discipline hearings. Visiting teachers also work with homebound students to ensure that there is clear communication between school and home, and that students do not lag in their academic progress. Support is also provided by visiting teachers to campus students, families, and staff during times of crisis (e.g., student or staff death, and so forth). Finally, visiting teachers help schools at the beginning of the school year in tracking students to ensure accurate enrollment information and to recover students who may be at risk of dropping out. Thus, their intervention activities are aligned with the Title IV goal of keeping students involved in school.

Community Agencies

The community organizations and agencies described here only represent some of the many AISD-Austin community collaborations that exist. In many cases, schools would not be able to support or implement any drug or violence prevention activities without the cooperation of community agencies. The school district's collaborations with community organizations align with the Title IV grant goal of increasing community involvement in promoting a safe and drug-free environment.

Communities in Schools

Communities in Schools (CIS) is a non-profit agency which works in partnership with AISD and other Texas school districts to provide prevention and intervention services on campuses and links to community resources. Program components can include counseling and supportive guidance, health and human services, parent involvement, pre-employment support, enrichment activities, and educational enhancement. CIS works directly with students to help them be successful in school. In addition, CIS staff members provide consulting with school staff, conduct case management, make home visits, set up tutoring and mentoring, and can provide referrals to local social service agencies. One of CIS' main prevention goals is student dropout prevention, which is addressed through several initiatives: child abuse awareness and prevention education (e.g., Pebble Project), family literacy, counseling, anger management training, enhancement of self-esteem and decision making skills, and job readiness training. CIS has been working with AISD for 12 years, and their services were offered at 25 AISD campuses during 1999-2000.

American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society chapter in Austin is working with AISD in two major areas:

- To reduce the use and possession of tobacco products; and,
- To integrate a comprehensive prevention education program in the middle schools where students are at high risk for beginning tobacco use.

Four examples of projects and initiatives that the American Cancer Society promoted in AISD include a teacher resource guide, two student instruction projects, and the annual Great American Smokeout (in conjunction with the American Lung Association). The teacher resource guide, ATLAS (Anti Tobacco League of American Students), developed in cooperation with Seton Healthcare Network, was created in response to area teachers' request for timesaving health promotion activities that could be integrated into the classroom.

The Tobacco Compliance Grant pilot study, funded by the Texas State Comptroller's Office, is a comprehensive student tobacco prevention program implemented in five middle schools. The American Cancer Society developed staff training sessions and five teaching modules based on the Center for Disease Control's recommendations for effective prevention programs. Another project, the Travis Vertical Team Youth Advocacy program, which used Title IV funds from several campuses, educated elementary, middle and high school students about the dangers of tobacco and drug use, strengthened self-esteem, and gave students an active role in their health education. This was accomplished by having students develop the program with educational and administrative support from the American Cancer Society. Students assessed the community on health issues, created tobacco prevention activities, and coordinated a network of other students. Participants developed leadership skills and worked to bridge communication between the schools and the community.

Finally, the annual Great American Smokeout event (observed in Austin and nationwide) supported awareness activities in 28 AISD schools. The American Cancer Society provided curriculum guides and educational information about the harmful effects of tobacco to teaching staff and over 19,000 AISD students.

Travis County Underage Drinking Prevention Task Force

The Travis County Underage Drinking Prevention Program Task Force includes individuals and organizations from Austin and Travis County that represent students, parents, and other community persons as well as a multitude of organizations within education, law enforcement, government, health, and social services that are interested in prevention. AISD is a member of the Task Force that meets monthly to inform and update members on current issues surrounding underage drinking.

The Task Force prevention program staffs perform outreach services to area school districts by providing presentations and consultations to students, staff, and parents. During 1999-2000, the prevention program staff made presentations at 29 AISD campuses. The most common presentation made this past year, entitled "Why Risk It?," focused on the state's zero tolerance law and the consequences of choices teens make about alcohol. Presentations to school staffs and PTA meetings also were made. In addition, the program staff made special presentations to summer school and driver's education classes. Special projects that program staffs were involved in included school health fairs, safe walk to school events, scouting meetings, and campaigns for a safe and sober spring break and prom/graduation.

LifeWorks

LifeWorks has been involved in a number of collaborations with AISD and other community partners to provide school-based services to youth and families. Services provided include substance abuse and pregnancy prevention programs, counseling services to individuals, families, and groups, support services to teen parents, anger management training, life skills training, and volunteer community service projects. During 1999-2000, LifeWorks collaborated with 29 AISD campuses and served over 600 AISD students.

SafePlace

SafePlace, an Austin organization devoted to education, prevention, intervention, and counseling on sexual abuse and harassment, has had a number of collaborations with AISD. SafePlace staff cooperated with other local organizations, including the Texas Department of Health, to host national satellite training from Harvard Medical School's Partnerships for Preventing Violence in the fall of 1999. SafePlace staff also accompanied several AISD student groups and one staff group to AISD's ROPES course program. SafePlace also provided specific staff training and assistance with policy development on peer sexual harassment to one high school in AISD during the school year.

However, the project in which SafePlace has been involved with AISD the most is a project to reduce student bullying and sexual harassment. This project, known as Expect Respect, was funded by a grant from the Center for Disease Control, and it provided a variety of school-based services to students, staff, and parents in eight AISD schools. The project was evaluated closely for effectiveness. The Expect Respect project consisted of several components: elementary school project, counseling and group services, educational presentations, and a summer program. The largest component was the elementary school project consisting of twelve weekly classroom instructional units adapted from a bullying prevention curriculum. Participating schools developed and adopted procedural guidelines for responding to bullying and sexual harassment. Parent seminars were held at two middle schools and one elementary school, and parent newsletters were sent home at several schools. In-service staff training was held on effective prevention and intervention strategies at participating schools. Individual counseling and student support groups were provided at several elementary, middle and high schools.

Due to the demand for training and materials from other schools that were not part of the CDC-funded study, SafePlace plans to schedule staff training during 2000-2001 for specific AISD campuses that want to use the curricula on the prevention of harassment and bullying. Plans have been made for a districtwide training of all counselors on these materials as well.

Community Action Network

The Community Action Network of Travis County is a public/private partnership of 14 organizations, including AISD, interested in building social capital in the Austin area. Their mission is to achieve sustainable social, health, educational and economic outcomes by engaging the community in a planning and implementation process that coordinates public, private and individual actions and resources. The Network focuses on 12 issue areas including education, children's mental health, substance use and public safety. The group's reports to the community raise awareness and provide a resource for data on issues related to social and public needs (see http://www.caction.org). Community assessments are available for most of the issue areas,

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including early education, K-12 education, health (physical, mental), housing, workforce development, substance abuse, and safety.

YWCA

In the 1999-2000 school year, the YWCA Youth Program offered weekly curriculum-based support groups for girls at three AISD middle schools (Fulmore, Covington and Dobie) and at the Alternative Learning Center Middle School. All groups offered education on the effects of substance use and abuse and other high-risk activities. In addition, the groups provided a safe space to discuss concerns, ask questions, receive support and develop positive peer relationships. The YWCA school-based services were provided to girls already involved in YWCA after-school programming and to girls who were identified by school counselors as at high-risk of drug use/abuse, dropping out, or other behavioral concerns. One-on-one intervention counseling was provided for 12 students needing or requesting additional support. The YWCA youth prevention programs utilized the SEARCH Institute's developmental assets model and focused on strengthening personal attitudes, making commitments against drug use, increasing social competency in order to ensure effective communications, and building stronger peer relationships, self-efficacy and assertiveness.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSIONS

During 1999-2000, AISD spent more than $1.3 million Title IV funds to provide programs, services, and activities to promote a safe and drug-free learning environment for the students of AISD. These funds provided teacher/staff training, student instruction in drug/violence prevention, character education, curriculum materials, student programs (e.g., peer mediation, youth leadership training, peer helping), counseling, parent education, community coordination, school security, and program monitoring and administration.

According to annual AISD student survey results, the most commonly reported substance used by students in grades four through twelve is alcohol, a finding that has been confirmed for years. Tobacco, marijuana and inhalants also are commonly reported substances used by students. Most students understand that these substances are dangerous for youth their age to use. In addition, most students report that schools are providing them with information on the dangers of drug use. However, student reported substance use, especially at secondary grade levels, increases in spite of this knowledge. Student discipline referrals for substance possession and use also have remained high (1,277 incidents) during 1999-2000. Most campus staff members perceive that at least some students on their campuses may have used some substances. Yet, staff perceptions of student drug use are underestimated. Furthermore, most staff members believe that the most serious problem on their campus is not drugs but rather student safety issues such as fighting, harassment, and threats. One area of improvement in AISD has been that the numbers of student discipline referrals for assaults on other students and on teachers have declined over the past two years. Furthermore, most students and campus staffs report feeling safe, and relatively few report being harmed or threatened with harm.

Students, staff, parents, and the community tend to perceive AISD Title IV-funded programs and activities as beneficial. Participants in district programs such as PAL and ROPES report many positive behavioral outcomes, and these participants have lower levels of student discipline offenses as compared to all district students. The SUPER I - INVEST and Positive Families programs are reported to have benefited students who have been removed to the district's disciplinary alternative school and have helped their parents as well in areas of communication, problem solving, and anger management. These individuals also tend to have lower levels of student discipline offenses as compared to all district students. Campus-based SDFSC-funded programs also are reported to have shown benefits to students, staff and parents, according to campus representatives. Examples of campus improvements include lowered student discipline referrals, increased student knowledge of the dangers of drugs, increased numbers of successful student conflict resolutions, increased parental involvement, and improved community collaboration. Curriculum initiatives in health and in guidance and counseling are continuing to highlight supplemental SDFSC resources in their respective core curriculum areas as determined by the state TEKS (Texas Educational Knowledge and Skills). At the program and district levels, campuses are being encouraged to tie their funding resources, their measured needs, and their goals and objectives into their CIPs (Campus Improvement Plans). Thus, the Title IV funds in AISD are being used to help reach the goals of the grant. Yet, these funds and program initiatives are only part of the district's efforts to improve safety and reduce drug use among AISD youth. The AISD Title IV program alone cannot accomplish the goals since the problems of youth

drug use and violence are community-wide and require more resources than is provided through the federal grant.

Moreover, there appear to be some barriers to success in AISD SDFSC-funded programs and initiatives that need to be addressed. For instance, in terms of systemic barriers, complex budgetary procedures within the district have made it difficult for many grant-funded programs, including Title IV, to gain easy and timely access to funds, thereby delaying or preventing the implementation of grant-related activities and programs. This somewhat limited access to SDFSC-funded activities can prevent some students, staff, and parents from being served. With campuses having difficulty in finding adequate or appropriate SDFSC resources in a timely manner within the grant year, campus and district staff members are often frustrated at the inability to use allocated funds.

The district has made improvements in violence prevention, with reduced discipline referrals over the past several years, and with the adoption of district and campus policies and procedures that specifically address violence prevention. However, drug prevention and reduction have not had as much attention as violence prevention, in spite of the fact that student discipline offenses related to drug possession or use have remained high and evidence from student surveys indicate that students report using such substances. Some efforts are being made to help students stay away from drugs (prevention) or seek help in the community (intervention) when needed. However, drug prevention is still not a required focus in all aspects of campus and district goals.

Within the district's Title IV program itself, there are continued limitations and challenges to the full integration of SDFSC prevention goals, objectives and available resources into districtwide and campus core initiatives. For example, in the past year, there were improvements in spending a larger percentage of the district's grant allocation. This was in part due to better planning, implementation and follow through on spending by each grant component. However, there were still challenges at the district and campus levels in spending all funds. Among district components, some areas, such as curriculum, had difficulty spending all of their Title IV funds due to cancellations in professional development training, changes in staffing mid-year, and a lack of an integrated year-long plan. With the Positive Families program, there was the problem of low enrollment and completion, in part due to the fact that policies were not in place to make program offering or completion mandatory (as is the case with INVEST). With campuses, there also was difficulty in spending all funds allocated. Sometimes failure of campuses to spend was due to unpredictable events (i.e., last-minute cancellation of speaker; materials not available or ordered too late), while at other times there were difficulties and delays in processing the financial paperwork.

With the overall Title IV grant allocation cut by 37% for the 2000-01 year, drastic changes already have been made in Title IV programs and services. These cuts caused district staff to prioritize what could be supported legitimately by Title IV funds, deciding what programs and services were essential to the purpose of Title IV, and considering whether other funds (e.g., grants, local dollars, etc.) could be justified to piece together support for certain functions and staff. The following changes have been made in the 2000-01 AISD Title IV program:

- Reduced or eliminated professional development and travel for staff funded through the grant;

- Reduced the percentage of Title IV salary support for grant manager, budget specialist, evaluator, science/health curriculum specialist, guidance and counseling counselor, school support community specialists;
- Eliminated Title IV salary support for AISD police, school support services secretary, part-time secretary for PAL;
- Reduced program support for PAL, ROPES, INVEST and Positive Families;
- Reduced support for curriculum and professional development;
- Eliminated funds for Advisory Council;
- Reduced campus allocation to approximately $2.00 per student.

These funding and program decisions will become more complicated as the district tries to spend its funds more efficiently and effectively in the future. The district will have to come to terms with the reality that the current strategy for funding Title IV programs and activities will not be possible as has been in the past. By law, efforts will have to be made to ensure that Title IV-funded activities and staff are supplementing not supplanting district efforts to promote a safe and drug-free environment. In addition, those programs and staff that are funded by Title IV will have to be aligned with the goals of the grant and not used to perpetuate activities and staff that are no longer efficient and effective.

CHAPTER 10: RECOMMENDATIONS

SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION

The Austin Independent School District (AISD) and its community need to give more attention to the issue of youth substance use. Substance use interferes with success in school and in society. Thus, prevention of drug use among Austin youth should be considered as seriously as prevention of youth violence. AISD student discipline incident data and student survey data confirm that the level of student substance use has not changed much, with students as early as fourth grade reporting usage, and usage rates increasing with grade level. Also based on these data sources, the most common substances used by students are alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and inhalants. Prevention education, including programs designed to increase protective factors, is occurring in AISD, but at this time it is not adequate to cause significant reduction in youth substance use.

Therefore, several suggestions can be made to improve the way that AISD and the Austin community can address youth substance use. Some systemic issues need to be addressed at the district level. The district needs to revise its district drug prevention plan that was last examined by the Board in 1992. The district has not implemented an overall plan since the older plan was initially proposed. Furthermore, the 1992 plan stated that all drug use would be eliminated by the year 2000, and the district is far from that goal at this point.

A second systemic area for improvement is for the district to require its campuses to integrate drug prevention and discipline measures into the District and Campus Improvement Plans (DIP, CIP). At this time, state law requires that the school district include violence prevention measures in its improvement plan, but there is no such requirement for drug prevention. To help AISD ensure the success of all students in school, the CIPs and DIP must include drug prevention as a goal with annual benchmarks for improvement.

Third, at all levels of the school district and the community, awareness must be raised of the extent of youth substance use. Discipline data and results of districtwide surveys show that youth drug use does occur. In fact, when comparing students' self-report of substance use with the perceptions of campus staff members about the level of student drug use, there may be some staff underestimation of the extent of student drug use in AISD. Without a clear understanding that youth substance use exists and is affecting children's success in school and in life, the district will not be able to have an effective prevention strategy. Awareness and honest discussion of substance use must include students, parents, school staff, and members of community organizations. There are several ways that youth substance use information can be shared in AISD, including campus advisory councils and CIPs, public forums, media (i.e., internet, TV, newspapers), school newsletters, and staff training.

A fourth area of improvement has to do with programs. The school district and the community must continue to support drug prevention and intervention programs, regardless of funding source. With impending federal allocations dwindling, and with local school dollars at risk due to the state's Chapter 41 plan of redistributing school district funds, AISD will have to seek out other means of supporting prevention. In fact, more collaboration and combinations of public and private dollars will be needed to make effective prevention happen. The campuses and the district will need to combine several funding sources where the goal is common – success for

all students. Related to this is the need for more cooperation with community service agencies and other organizations such as law enforcement, the faith community, and other experts to provide services in youth drug prevention, intervention and treatment. Helping organizations need to have a door to the school district through which campuses know all the available services and community agencies know there is a formal channel for interacting with campuses.

Fifth, the district must reexamine the current prevention programs, services and curricula that it offers, including those provided through Title IV funding. This evaluation report highlighted the district's Title IV-supported programs, services, and curriculum efforts, and to varying degrees these funded efforts have addressed the prevention of youth substance use. The district must continue to abide by the Principles of Effectiveness guidelines in selecting, supporting and evaluating research-based programs and activities. This means choosing to fund and support programs that are nationally recognized as successful programs for prevention or reduction of youth drug use, such as Project ALERT. In addition, this means supporting programs and activities that include research-supported principles or concepts known to be in line with factors that help prevent or reduce youth substance use (e.g., protective factors research, mentoring, experiential learning). This also means continuing to assess and evaluate the programs and curricula offered to measure whether progress is being made in preventing or reducing drug use.

Violence Prevention

The picture for safety in AISD schools is mixed. Positively, most students and campus staffs report feeling safe, and student discipline referrals for weapons possessions, and for assaults on other students and on staff continue to show a decline. However, some would argue that **any** violent act or weapon in school is an unacceptable situation. There is room for improvement, and the solution to violence will not be simple. As with student substance use, safety will have to be addressed in the district on a continual basis by all stakeholders, including students, parents, staffs, and community members.

First, continued monitoring and evaluation will elicit a better understanding of the problem. The following will need to be addressed at the district and campus level: campus-by-campus analysis of violent incidents; examination of campus and district policies, procedures, programs and practices regarding violence (e.g., are procedures being enforced); assessment of perceptions of safety among all persons associated with a campus (i.e., students, parents, staffs); participation by all persons associated with the campus (especially students) in the effort to reduce violence and the causes of violence. The extent to which this is occurring in the district now is inconsistent. Being that state law now requires the district and its campuses to include violence prevention in improvement plans, future years should show more campus staff members paying attention to progress in reducing violence. Continuous data collection will enable the district and its campuses to measure progress toward the goal of a safe school-community for its students, staffs, and families.

Second, to increase knowledge and skills, campuses and the district need to offer annual training for all staffs, students, parents, and interested community members in violence prevention methods. Campus staff members that were surveyed indicated that various kinds of prevention training are needed. This may take the form of refreshers on district and campus student code of conduct, bullying/harassment prevention, peer mediation and conflict resolution,

communication skills, and parenting skills. These topics can be covered in the classroom, at parent-teacher association meetings, during staff meetings, and at community forums. Information also can be provided through the media (e.g., on AISD's website and community television channel), and through information sent to students' homes. To some degree, this already has begun in AISD with annual staff training on campus crisis plans and campus improvement plans.

Third, it is essential that campus staff members and district staff members be connected with community resources that can provide assistance, training, mediation, counseling, and other support services in the area of safety promotion and violence reduction. The collaboration between AISD and its community will be vital to improved communication and problem solving in the area of school safety. In addition, with future cuts in federal monies, and with the state-authorized reallocation of funds from property-rich to property-poor school districts, AISD will need to seek out other sources of funding and services to continue to provide level prevention support to its students, staff and families.

Participant Access

With a 37% reduction in Title IV SDFSC allocations for 2000-01 and uncertainty in future funding, AISD is faced with an even greater challenge of providing access to prevention and intervention resources. As an educational institution, AISD needs to provide effective prevention education to all students in order to promote a safe and drug-free learning environment. Several recommendations to improve access should be considered. For instance, AISD must ensure that drug prevention goals and objectives are in the District Improvement Plan (DIP) and in each Campus Improvement Plan (CIP). Progress was made during 1999-2000 when the state required that all districts and campuses put violence prevention in their improvement plans, but drug prevention goals have yet to be addressed. A second recommendation is for AISD to require the integration of drug and violence prevention materials, resources and training into the district's core curriculum areas. At this time, drug and violence prevention education is inconsistently implemented in AISD, in part because there is no mandate or requirement for it to be included as part of every child's education. Science, health, and guidance and counseling curriculum areas are prime spots to integrate drug and violence prevention into TEKS and should be the first targets for requiring such curriculum elements.

Another improvement to support drug and violence prevention efforts is to require staff training and to establish district/campus prevention teams to monitor progress. These methods will involve parents, students, staff and the community in the problem-solving process to improve youth safety and reduce student substance use. Training and campus teams will help individuals to recognize signs of drug use and learn productive methods for prevention. The district is taking a first step at establishing campus IMPACT teams through training in the 2000-01 school year. Campus advisory councils also can include drug and violence prevention in the campus improvement plans.

AISD must encourage more efficient combinations of funding sources for programs and initiatives to promote the common goals of student health, safety and success in school. For example, collaborations with community resources and services can augment AISD prevention and intervention programs, whether Title IV-funded or not, and thereby, increase access to those programs. The PAL peer mentoring program can benefit from having multiple funding sources

both internal and external to AISD. Since high school and middle school students who are PALs receive academic course credit for being in the program, PAL should have its basic support from campuses and local budget. However, due to its community involvement component, other external funding sources should be sought. Currently, there are external grant efforts to expand PAL in AISD and statewide. Thus, AISD must consider the relative value of this elective course-program to its students. In addition, AISD must provide support to seek grant procurement and implementation.

District Title IV programs, such as PAL, ROPES, SUPER I-INVEST and Positive Families are showing benefits to students, staff, and families, as reported by these participants and as shown through district discipline indicators. However, some evidence, such as the number of students served per program component, should be taken into consideration when deciding where to allocate the relatively small amount of Title IV dollars that come to AISD. This is the case for Positive Families, where the program may be very beneficial to its participants, but with low program referral, enrollment and completion rates, the district must reconsider how this program service is positioned with regard to other prevention options. AISD should either find a better way to implement the program through procedural and policy changes, or merge the program with other curriculum regularly offered at the district's Alternative Learning Center.

All current Title IV program staffing and services should be reexamined in order to see whether all district students, staff members, and families are being served adequately. As federal funding decreases, as federal grant regulations require districts to use research-based practices, and as staff members are asked to spread their time over more activities districtwide, it is imperative that the district review the current staffing strategy to determine whether it is the most effective way to maximize outcomes for the district in terms of the intent of the Title IV grant. For example, one suggestion for expanding services to campuses is by redistributing the School Support Community Specialists (SSCSs) in order to provide more efficient and focused service to campuses by level: elementary, middle, and high school. Three individuals could target their efforts to drug and violence prevention activities by assisting campuses in their Title IV plans, implementation and evaluation of their activities, by being the liaisons for communication between the Grant Office and the campuses for Title IV, and by providing technical help to campuses so that their crisis plans are up to date. The benefits of this arrangement include more timely communication between central office services (e.g., grant, finance, curriculum, evaluation) and the campuses and therefore a better use of Title IV funds.

Another suggestion for increasing services with limited Title IV resources is to build capacity in the ROPES program by using existing AISD staff trained in facilitation. During 1999-2000, there continued to be an overwhelming demand for ROPES program services, with over 2000 individuals turned away due to a booked schedule and a limit of three full-time staff to serve students. However, during 1999-2000, the ROPES program was able to provide facilitation training to some campus staff members, thereby enabling the program to meet the demand to serve more students. These trained campus staff members should be called upon to assist in future ROPES facilitation, and they should be encouraged to seek ROPES facilitator certification so that a safe program can be provided to more AISD students. In addition, with the suggestion to redistribute the SSCSs among campuses, there would be an additional position made available that could be used toward filling a certified ROPES facilitator, again for the purpose of providing more services to fill the existing demand in AISD.

The campus-level programs also can be examined for efficiency and effectiveness in the overall district allocation of Title IV funds. Campuses improved in the overall percentage of funds spent during 1999-2000, but there is room for improvement from the 78% spending level. Part of the improvement could come from streamlining AISD's financial procedures for accessing and using grant funds, including Title IV funds. The most common complaint from campuses about difficulties in implementing their Title IV activities had to do with the complex financial procedures, delays, and extensive paperwork involved. From a grant management perspective, improvements also could be made in the way funds are allocated to campuses. For example, campuses could be given a very specific menu of choices for how to spend Title IV funds. Although this may cause some limits to flexibility at some campuses, the goal must be to spend all of the Title IV funds in order to benefit all AISD children. Continued monitoring and assessment through regular evaluation is another important method of ensuring that programs and activities are adhering to Title IV grant objectives (including the Principles of Effectiveness) and are being done in the most efficient manner possible.

Parent involvement initiatives in AISD provide good examples of supporting district and campus efforts through multiple funding sources, both local and federal monies. Parent involvement is a common goal of the district (board policy), Account for Learning grant, and Titles I and IV. There are some campuses that have parent education staff who promote parent involvement, while other campuses choose to use their campus Title IV funds to support parent involvement activities. The district's Family Resource Center, funded by Title I and local funds, acts as a center of support and information to promote parent involvement. With parent involvement shown to be a key to ensuring student learning, the district and its campuses should make certain that all of these efforts are coordinated in order to capitalize on available resources.

At the individual level, it is vital that AISD involve its students regularly in the process of needs assessment, problem solving, program development and evaluation in order to reduce drug use. This will require the cooperative effort of all school district and community members.

Program Evaluation

Improvements can be made in AISD Title IV program evaluation. Program evaluation is an ever-evolving process in which continual, participatory learning brings about new ways to improve the methods used to evaluate programs as well as suggestions for improving the programs being evaluated. One improvement to AISD's Title IV program evaluation is the addition of more pre-program/activity measurements to the existing post-program measurements so that progress can be assessed more accurately over time. In addition, Title IV evaluation can benefit by extending assessment to include other district stakeholders, such as parents and community members. This can be accomplished by combining data collection methods among other evaluation and assessment efforts being conducted by the district. Another recommendation is to continue receiving district support to monitor and evaluate district indicators (e.g., discipline, attendance, academic measures) that are key to Title IV. This support will need to come in the form of a continuing district mandate to show accountability for improvements in the safety and health of AISD youth. This result may be realized if campuses and the district are required to examine progress toward reducing student drug use and violence in the improvement plans. The district's evaluation staff can be called upon to provide technical assistance to campus staff and

other district staff on such topics as measurement, data interpretation, and incorporating data into planning.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

FEDERAL GUIDELINES FOR USE OF TITLE IV SDFSC FUNDS

NON-REGULATORY GUIDANCE FOR IMPLEMENTING PART B OF THE DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES ACT OF 1986 – NOVEMBER 1992

3.03. Allowable Use of Funds

Funds shall be used to implement age-appropriate drug education and drug abuse prevention programs for grades EC through 12. Funds may be used for:

1. the development, acquisition, and implementation of elementary and secondary school drug abuse education and prevention curricula and textbooks and materials, including audio-visual materials
   - developed from the most readily available, accurate, and up-to-date information; and
   - which clearly and consistently teach that illicit drug use is WRONG AND HARMFUL;
2. school-based programs of drug abuse prevention and early intervention (other than treatment), which
   - should, to the extent practicable, employ counselors whose sole duty is to provide drug abuse prevention counseling to students;
   - may include the use of drug-free older students as positive role models and instruction relating to
     a. self-esteem;
     b. drugs and drug addiction;
     c. decision-making and risk-taking;
     d. stress management techniques; and
     e. assertiveness;
   - may bring law enforcement officers into the classroom to provide anti-drug information and positive alternatives to drug use, including decision-making and assertiveness skills; and,
   - in the case of a local education agency that determines it has served all students in all grades, such local education agency may target additional funds to particularly vulnerable age groups, especially those in grades 4 through 9.
3. family drug abuse prevention programs, including education for parents to increase awareness about the symptoms and effects of drug use through the development and dissemination of appropriate educational materials;
4. drug abuse prevention and intervention counseling programs (which counsel that illicit drug use is wrong and harmful) for students, parents, and immediate families, including professional and peer counselors and involving the participation (where appropriate) of parents, other adult counselors, and reformed abusers, which may include
   - the employment of counselors, social workers, psychologists, or nurses who are trained to provide drug abuse prevention and intervention counseling; or
   - the provision of services through a contract with a private nonprofit organization that employs individuals who are trained to provide such counseling;

5. outreach activities, drug and alcohol abuse education and prevention programs, and referral services for school dropouts;
6. guidance counseling programs and referral services for parents and immediate families of drug and alcohol abusers;
7. program of referral for drug abuse treatment and rehabilitation;
8. programs of inservice and preservice training in drug and alcohol abuse prevention for teachers, counselors, other school personnel, athletic directors, public service personnel, law enforcement officials, judicial officials, and community leaders;
9. programs in primary prevention and early intervention, such as the interdisciplinary school-team approach;
10. community education programs and other activities to involve parents and communities in the fight against drug and alcohol abuse;
11. public education programs on drug and alcohol abuse, including programs utilizing professionals and former drug and alcohol abusers;
12. model alternative schools for youth with drug problems that address the special needs of such students through education and counseling; and,
13. on-site efforts in schools to enhance identification and discipline of drug and alcohol abusers, and to enable law enforcement officials to take necessary action in cases of drug possession and supplying of drugs and alcohol to the student population;
14. special programs and activities to prevent drug and alcohol abuse among student athletes, involving their parents and family in such drug and alcohol abuse prevention efforts, and using athletic programs and personnel in preventing drug and alcohol abuse among students; and,
15. in the case of a local education agency that determines that it provides sufficient drug and alcohol abuse education during regular school hours, after-school programs that provide drug and alcohol abuse education for school-aged children, including children who are unsupervised after school, and that may include school-sponsored sports, recreational, educational, or instructional activities (local education agency may make grants or contracts with nonprofit community-based organizations that offer sports, recreation, education, or child care programs); and,
16. other programs of drug and alcohol abuse education and prevention, consistent with the purposes of this part. [Ref. P.L. 101-647, Sec. 5125 (a)].

A local or intermediate education agency or consortium may receive funds under this part for any fiscal year covered by an application under section 4126 approved by the state education agency.

SAFE AND DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES ACT OF 1994 - SEC. 4116. LOCAL DRUG AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Authorized Activities. – A comprehensive drug and violence prevention program carried out under this subpart may include –

1) age-appropriate, developmentally based drug prevention and education programs for all students, from the preschool level through grade 12, that address the legal, social, personal and health consequences of the use of illegal drugs, promote a sense of individual responsibility, and provide information about effective techniques for resisting peer pressure to use illegal drugs;

2) programs of drug prevention, comprehensive health education, early intervention, pupil services, mentoring, or rehabilitation referral, which emphasize students' sense of individual responsibility and which may include –
   a) the dissemination of information about drug prevention;
   b) the professional development of school personnel, parents, students, law enforcement officials, judicial officials, health service providers and community leaders in prevention, education, early intervention, pupil services or rehabilitation referral; and
   c) the implementation of strategies, including strategies to integrate the delivery of services from a variety of providers, to combat illegal alcohol, tobacco and drug use, such as –
      i. family counseling;
      ii. early intervention activities that prevent family dysfunction, enhance school performance, and boost attachment to school and family; and
      iii. activities, such as community service and service-learning projects, that are designed to increase students' sense of community;
3) age-appropriate, developmentally based violence prevention and education programs for all students, from the preschool level through grade 12, that address the legal, health, personal, and social consequences of violent and disruptive behavior, including sexual harassment and abuse, and victimization associated with prejudice and intolerance, and that include activities designed to help students develop a sense of individual responsibility and respect for the rights of others, and to resolve conflicts without violence;
4) violence prevention programs for school-aged youth, which emphasize students' sense of individual responsibility and may include –
   a) the dissemination of information about school safety and discipline;
   b) the professional development of school personnel, parents, students, law enforcement officials, judicial officials, and community leaders in designing and implementing strategies to prevent school violence;
   c) the implementation of strategies, such as conflict resolution and peer mediation, student outreach efforts against violence, anti-crime youth councils (which work with school and community-based organizations to discuss and develop crime prevention strategies), and the use of mentoring programs, to combat school violence and other forms of disruptive behavior, such as sexual harassment and abuse, and
   d) the development and implementation of character education programs, as a component of a comprehensive drug or violence prevention program, that are tailored by communities, parents and schools; and
   e) comprehensive, community-wide strategies to prevent or reduce illegal gang activities;
5) supporting safe zones of passage for students between home and school through such measures as Drug- and Weapon-Free School Zones, enhanced law enforcement, and neighborhood patrols;
6) acquiring and installing metal detectors and hiring security personnel;
7) professional development for teachers and other staff and curricula that promote the awareness of and sensitivity to alternatives to violence through courses of study that include related issues of intolerance and hatred in history;
8) the promotion of before- and after-school recreational, instructional, cultural, and artistic programs in supervised community settings;

9) drug abuse resistance education programs, designed to teach students to recognize and resist pressures to use alcohol or other drugs, which may include activities such as classroom instruction by uniformed law enforcement officers, resistance techniques, resistance to peer pressure and gang pressure, and provision for parental involvement; and,
10) the evaluation of any of the activities authorized under this subsection.

1999-2000 AISD SDFSC Programs, Approved Use of Monies

Use of Monies	Campus Programs	Private & ND Schools*	Alternative Programs & Services (INVEST, Positive Families, Counselors)	Curriculum	PAL	ROPES
Development, acquisition, & implementation of pre-K-12 drug abuse and violence education & prevention curricula.	X	X	X	X	X	
School-based programs of drug abuse/violence prevention & early intervention (other than treatment).	X	X	X	X	X	X
Family drug abuse or violence prevention.	X	X	X			
Drug abuse or violence prevention & intervention counseling.			X			
Referral for drug abuse treatment/rehabilitation.			X		X	
Inservice & preservice training in drug/alcohol abuse or violence prevention for teachers, counselors, etc.	X		X	X		
Primary prevention & early intervention, e.g., interdisciplinary school team.	X		X	X	X	X
Community education to involve parents & communities in fight against drug/alcohol abuse and violence.	X	X	X		X	X
Model alternative schools for youth with drug or violence problems that address special needs of such students through education & counseling.			X			
On-site efforts in schools to enhance identification & discipline of drug & alcohol abusers or violent youth.	X		X			X

*ND = Facilities for Neglected or Delinquent Youth

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APPENDIX B

SAFE AND DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES ACT PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVENESS (JULY, 1998)

PRINCIPLE 1

A grant recipient shall base its programs on a thorough assessment of objective data about the drug and violence problems in the schools and communities served.

PRINCIPLE 2

A grant recipient shall, with the assistance of a local or regional advisory council where required by the SDFSCA, establishes a set of measurable goals and objectives, and design its programs to meet those goals and objectives.

PRINCIPLE 3

A grant recipient shall design and implement its programs for youth based on research or evaluation that provides evidence that the programs used prevent or reduce drug use, violence, or disruptive behavior among youth.

PRINCIPLE 4

A grant recipient shall evaluate its programs periodically to assess its progress toward achieving its goals and objectives, and use its evaluation results to refine, improve, and strengthen its program, and to refine its goals and objectives as appropriate.

Source: Federal Register, June 1, 1998, vol. 63, no. 104, pages 29901-29906.

APPENDIX C

SDFSC PLANNING AND EVALUATION FORMS

Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act

Campus-Based Programs Planning

1999-2000

School Name and code number: _____ Principal: _____ (signature required)

SDFSC Contact Name: _____ Principal Phone Number: _____

SDFSC Contact Phone Number: _____ (please print) School Support Community Specialist: _____ (signature required)

GOAL: # _____

OBJECTIVES	Activities and Target Groups*	Measurable Outcomes	Methods of Measuring Outcome	Budget Amount@
1	Target Group Activity 1			
2	Target Group Activity 1			

School Support Specialists ***Target Groups – see attached information** **@ Budget – see attached information.**

Total Expenditure: $ _____

Original Allocation: $ _____

Supplemental Funds (if any): $ _____
From (Check one or more) ___ Collaboration with other schools
___ Title I ___ Other Grants

Title IV Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act Campus-Evaluation Form 1999-2000

School Name: _____ SDFSC Contact Name: _____

SDFSC Contact Phone Number: _____

GOALS/OBJECTIVES: (See your 1999-2000 Title IV SDFSC Campus Planning Form that was approved)

Activities and Target Groups* (TEA Required Information)	Measurable Outcomes (Specific, measured numbers that show changes in knowledge, attitude, and/or behavior)	Methods of Measuring Outcome (survey, test, discipline, attendance, etc.)
Target Participant(s) (Fill in **numbers** as appropriate) _ Parents - Volunteers _____ _ Parents - Parent Training _____ _ Parents - Public Awareness _____ _ Parents – Fund Raising _____ _ Students – Program Design _____ _ Students – Program Delivery _____ _ Students – Program Evaluation or Critiquing _____ _ Campus Staff _____ _ Community – Staff Training _____ _ Community – Public Awareness _____ _ Community – Joint Service Delivery/Referrals _____ Activity Completed: (See TEA Code Sheet) TEA Activity Code: _____ Activity Name: _____ Brief Activity Description: _____ Check one of the following: _ Will continue to implement activity as designed _ Will modify activity to improve effectiveness _ Will not continue this program/activity		

APPENDIX D

AISD Alcohol and Drug Abuse Education and Prevention Plan

(Revised 9/8/92)

"The need for leadership and broad participation in drug prevention is not just for a year or two, but rather for the next decade and beyond. Alcohol and tobacco, especially, will be difficult to eliminate from young people's lives because they are legal and accepted for adults. Considering the magnitude of changes needed, it is clear that the national commitment to drug-free youth must be long term... America must redouble its efforts, and must refuse to tolerate drug use in any school, in any community, and in any home. The nation's children deserve no less." (September 1990, National Commission on Drug Free Schools, Toward a Drug Free Generation: A Nation's Responsibility)

It is the philosophy of the Austin Independent School District that the children of Austin deserve to grow and learn in a drug free school and community. In keeping with this belief and with requirements of the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act, the district is implementing a comprehensive Alcohol and Drug Abuse Education and Prevention Plan. The district's goal is to have a drug-free school population by the year 2000.

The AISD Drug Abuse Education and Prevention Plan is based upon the requirements of the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1986 (Public Law 99-570) as amended by the Crime and Control Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-647), Section 5143. The following are the major components of this plan and will be implemented in AISD:

1. Personnel training in alcohol and drug related issues;
2. Age-appropriate alcohol and drug education and prevention curricula at each grade level (Pre-kindergarten through grade 12);
3. A student assistance program which will identify, refer, and provide intervention and counseling services for students;
4. Distribution of information about drug and alcohol programs available to students and employees;
5. Inclusion of drug and alcohol standards in discipline policies for students and personnel policies for employees; distribution of these standards to parents, students and employees;
6. Data gathering to describe the extent of alcohol and drug usage in the schools. Participation in other required evaluation efforts of the drug prevention program;
7. Assurance that all required activities convey to students that the use of illicit drugs and the unlawful possession and use of alcohol are wrong and harmful;
8. A district advisory council composed of individuals who are parents, teachers, officers of state and local government, medical professions, representatives of law enforcement agencies, community-based organizations and other groups with interest or expertise in the field of drug abuse education and prevention.

The district will monitor activities in each of these areas and will regularly assess and report the progress being made toward the complete elimination of drug and alcohol abuse. The

district will strive to create quality educational environments for students. Local and grant resources will be used to provide training for teachers and students in positive alternatives to drug and alcohol abuse. This training will include such topics as: conflict resolution, peer assistance and tutoring, Quality Schools training for teachers and Control Theory training for students.

The central administration shall:

1. Provide administrator and employee in-service training on alcohol and other drug-related matters yearly;
2. Develop and introduce multi-component K-12 drug education and prevention programs based upon assessment of drug problems, including alcohol and tobacco, of students and staff;
3. Conduct yearly evaluations of all drug education and prevention programs and conduct school surveys every two to three years to assess drug preference and patterns of use on campus;
4. Conduct regular meetings with the district Drug-Free Schools and Communities Advisory committee to obtain information and input regarding needs and program ideas;
5. Cooperate with the Austin Police Department in the operation of the DARE (Drug Awareness and Resistance Education) program, districtwide, at grade levels 5 and 7.

Each principal shall:

1. Operate a drug and alcohol abuse prevention and education program on each campus. Information and activities designed to encourage smoking cessation and to eliminate the use of other tobacco products will be included in this program. Program activities will be documented each year through a process to be managed by the AISD Office of Program Evaluation;
2. Identify high-risk students via a Student Assistance Program and provide individuals and group support, as appropriate.

The central administration and each principal shall:

1. Coordinate with appropriate state and local drug and alcohol abuse, health, and law enforcement agencies in order to effectively conduct drug and alcohol abuse education, intervention, and referral for treatment and rehabilitation;
2. Provide information about available drug and alcohol counseling and rehabilitation and re-entry programs to students and employees;
3. Coordinate with local law enforcement agencies in order to improve security on school grounds and in the surrounding community and to educate students about: (a) the dangers of drug use and drug-related violence; (b) the penalties for possession of or trafficking in illegal drugs; (c) techniques for resisting drug abuse; and (d) the importance of cooperating with law enforcement officials in eliminating drug abuse and identifying individuals who supply drugs to students;
4. Promulgate standards of conduct, applicable to all students and employees, which clearly prohibit the unlawful possession, use or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol on school premises or as part of any of its activities. Clearly state that sanctions (consistent with local, state and federal law), up to and including expulsion or terminations of employment and referral for prosecution, will be imposed on students and employees who violate these standards of conduct. Parents, students, and employees will be provided with a copy of this information.

5. Maintain a comprehensive policy on: the possession, use, promotion, distribution, and sale of drugs, including alcohol and tobacco. The policy should apply to students, staff, and anyone attending school functions.

District staff, students and parents shall:

Participate in appropriate learning and training activities and cooperate in efforts to eliminate drug and alcohol abuse in the Austin Independent School District.

For any programs or activities funded by AISD Drug-Free Schools and Communities (DFSC) grant, the following requirements must also be met:

Any publication or public announcement will clearly identify the program or activity as being funded in whole or part by the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1986. Materials produced or distributed with funds made available under this grant must reflect the message that illicit drug use is wrong and harmful.

Technical assistance related to the implementation of this plan is available from the Division of Curriculum Support Services.

APPENDIX E

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE AISD ADMINISTRATIVE TASK FORCE ON SCHOOL SAFETY 1997

District-level Recommendations

- Increase community use of campus facilities.
  - Identify funding for utility, custodial, supervision expenses associated with opening schools.
  - Establish procedures and provide training to encourage after-hour use of campuses.

- Develop community alternatives for violent youth.
  - Increase supervision of students on probation and parole.
  - Provide additional intervention efforts to youth involved with gateway criminal activities.
  - Provide program resources to insure more consistent support/monitoring for students returning to campuses from alternative settings.

- Enhance focus of school safety at the community level.
  - Within the Juvenile Crime Task Force, establish a subcommittee focused on school safety.
  - Establish ongoing committee to monitor the implementation of safety-related issues and coordinating with the Juvenile Crime Task Force.

- Develop programs to reinforce positive behavior among youth.
  - Establish a foundation to subsidize youth job programs.
  - Acquire corporate sponsorship for rewards program, e.g., free products and services for good grades.

- Strengthen parental/adult involvement with school youth.

- Acquire corporate commitment to provide paid employee time for school involvement.

- Design and implement professional development.
  - Interpretation of Texas Education Code, Chapter 37 Safe Schools.
  - Policies and Procedures.
  - Documentation.
  - Role of the Placement Review Committee.

- Develop and implement a District Discipline Management Plan.
  - Based on AISD Student Code of Conduct.
  - Update and revise discretionary and mandatory removal forms.

- Develop and implement a monitoring system.
  - Ensure the establishment of a Placement Review Committee on each campus.
  - Design a systematic teacher survey.
  - Gather data on the number and reasons for student removals.
  - Evaluate the effectiveness of the Alternative Education Program.

- Continue the Administrative Task Force on School Safety to serve as an advisory group and monitor the implementation of the recommendations approved by the Board of Trustees.

- Update and revise inserts for the School Safety and Emergency Resource Manual.
  - Copy of Chapter 37 and local policy.
  - Include list of professional development activities.
  - Revise discretionary and mandatory removal forms.

- Strengthen and support existing legislation on Safe Schools in the district. Seek changes where necessary in the law. Strengthen incentives for appropriate student behavior.

Campus Recommendations

- Establish dress codes, which are clearly defined, tied to district policy, and consistently enforced.
- Establish a discipline management plan, which is clearly defined, tied to AISD Code of Conduct, and consistently enforced.
- All secondary campuses will have full-time school resource officers (two per high school, one per middle school).
- Increase school resource officer mobility by providing patrol cars and bicycles as appropriate.
- Install video monitoring systems at secondary campuses.
- All hall monitors and supervisory staff will have radio communication equipment linked to AISD Police Department.
- All classrooms will have the ability to communicate with administration.
- Each school will develop and implement a campus supervision plan that will:
  - Clearly identify adult supervision areas, such as hallways, bus stops, open areas, cafeterias, bathrooms, etc.,
  - List a well-defined supervision schedule,
  - Clearly define procedures for supervision of identified areas,
  - Create student safety patrols on high school campuses.
- Each school will ensure that key staffs are aware of individual contracts for students.
- Each campus will have an individualized campus crisis response plan that covers all situations detailing procedures and staff responsibilities.
- The curriculum will include sections on the following and these should be infused into all areas of the curriculum:
  - Communication skills,
  - Negotiations,
  - Respect for differences,
  - Appropriate decision making,
  - Tolerance,
  - Goal setting,
  - Mediation,
  - Conflict resolution,
  - Stress management,
  - Dealing with loss, grief, pain,
  - Peer refusal skills.
- Each school will have options to allow students to resolve conflicts, such as:
  - Cooling off options,
  - Peer mediation,
  - Multi-party mediations,
  - Anonymous student hotline.
- Provide opportunities for student success and a sense of connectiveness at school.
  - Provide student recognition programs,
  - Co-curricular and extra-curricular service learning,
  - Career exploration.

APPENDIX F
CHAPTER 3 DATA

METHODS AND DATA SOURCES

DISTRICT STUDENT DISCIPLINE DATA BASE

The *Texas Education Code, Subtitle G. Safe Schools, Chapter 37. Discipline, Law and Order*, addresses the student discipline issues and actions that must be taken in Texas school districts (Texas Education Code, 1997). This legislation deals with a number of prohibited student behaviors, including substance possession or acts of violence, which are the focus of the federal Title IV grant. In accordance with this state legislation, AISD has adopted and provided to all campus staff, students, and parents a *Student Code of Conduct* (2000) that explains the standards of expected student behavior (according to Chapter 37 legislation) and the consequences of misconduct. Both of these documents address student actions that would result in school removal, placement in an alternative education program, suspension, or expulsion. In addition, explanations are given in these documents for the process of removal, including a student discipline hearing, appeal, review, emergency placements, and other procedures. As of the 1999-2000 school year, Chapter 37 legislation impacted reporting requirements for the Title IV grant in that school district discipline records are now submitted (known as 425 records) to the Texas Education Agency as part of PEIMS (Public Education Information Management System).

In AISD, there is a student discipline reporting system in which campus administrative staff members report incidents of student offenses. These data are recorded in the district's discipline database. For every student discipline incident that occurs, a campus administrator must report student identification, incident date, school, behavior code (offense type), discipline action, parent notification, and a brief description of the incident. Progress and discipline outcomes are tracked through this system. Summary reports can be produced for campuses and for the district as a whole.

Since the Title IV grant focuses on reducing the incidence of drug use and violence, several specific types of student offense records have been examined. These offenses include substance (drug) possession or use (tobacco, alcohol, marijuana or other illegal controlled substance, glue or aerosol); assaults (on students or staff); and illegal weapons (firearms, illegal knives, clubs, etc.).

TEXAS SURVEY OF DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE

In response to recommendations from the National Commission on Drug Free Schools Final Report (September 1991), student surveys have been used to obtain necessary substance use information. Every other year, the Texas School Survey of Drug and Alcohol Use (TSSDAU) is administered. When the TSSDAU is not the instrument of choice, the SAODUS is administered (see Doolittle & Sharkey, 1999).

The TSSDAU is a multiple-choice survey that has been used statewide since 1988 and is endorsed by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Continuity of survey administration over the years has enabled examination of year-to-year use comparisons. Another advantage of using TSSDAU is that it allows comparisons with other Texas school districts that participate in the statewide assessment. This survey, analyzed by the Public Policy Research Institute (PPRI) at

Texas A&M University, is sponsored and partially subsidized by the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (TCADA).

For AISD, the total sample goal for the survey in 1999-2000 was 9,175 students (elementary - grades 4-6 - sample of 3,105; secondary - grades 7-12 - sample of 6,070). The target sample goal was not reached due to failure of some schools to administer or return surveys. This was sometimes due to a lack of time and resources for staff to administer the survey during the busy school year. The total number of surveys returned to Texas A&M University was 7,099, and the total number of surveys valid for analysis was 6,811. Surveys were eliminated as not valid if they met one or more of the following criteria: blank, grade level missing, or identified as exaggerator by positive response on an item that asked about use of a fictitious drug substance. Thus, the valid response rate of surveys returned and scanned was 95.9%.

TSSDAU administration takes approximately 40 minutes and includes the following types of questions: self-report of substance use, attitudes and opinions about usage, actions taken while using certain substances, participation in district SDFSC prevention and education activities, school safety perceptions and experiences, and demographics. Students in grades four through twelve were surveyed. Student participation was completely voluntary and individual responses were anonymous. Strict confidentiality standards were applied to all stages of data collection and storage. A demographic summary of the survey sample is shown in the table below.

TSSDAU 2000 Student Respondent Demographics

TSSDAU 2000 Survey Sample	Elementary Students (Number)	Elementary Students (Percentage)	Secondary Students (Number)	Secondary Students (Percentage)
Gender				
Females	1,139	49%	2,121	52%
Males	1,367	51%	1,979	48%
Total	2,506	100%	4,100	100%
Ethnicity				
African-American	388	15%	454	11%
Asian-American	54	2%	116	3%
Mexican-American	1,059	40%	1,282	32%
Native American	33	1%	20	1%
White	914	34%	286	6%
Other	206	8%	1,832	7%
Total	2,654	100%	3,990	100%

Source: TSSDAU, 2000

EMPLOYEE COORDINATED SURVEY

In the spring of 2000, a stratified random sample of 784 AISD employees at campuses received a survey, distributed by the Office of Program Evaluation. The purpose of this survey was to obtain staff opinions and perceptions about student substance use, student and staff safety, and AISD prevention education efforts. Of the 587 surveys returned, 549 were validated and used for analysis. The respondent sample consisted of approximately 283 teachers, 99 counselors, 58 campus administrators (i.e., principals and assistant principals), and 109 classified staff (i.e., hall monitors, teaching assistants).

SUBSTANCE USE IN AISD

DISTRICT STUDENT DISCIPLINE DATA RELATED TO SUBSTANCE USE

The following table shows the number and percent of student discipline incidents by various categories, including school level, substance, and gender. The overall number of incidents in 1999-2000 for substance use or possession was 1,277; the number of students that were referred for those incidents was 774 (approximately 1.6 to 1 ratio).

Numbers and Percentages of AISD Student Discipline Incidents for Substance Possession or Use, 1999-2000

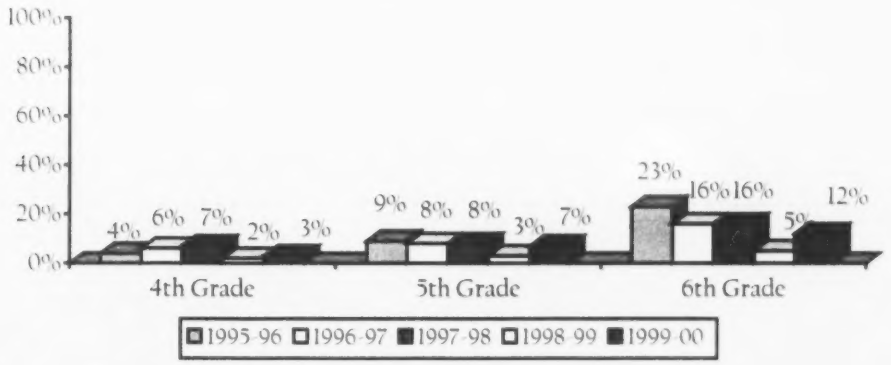
	Number	Percent
School Level		
High	522	67%
Middle	246	32%
Elementary	6	1%
Substance		
Marijuana	915	72%
Alcohol	179	14%
Tobacco	183	14%
Gender		
Males	582	75%
Females	192	25%
Totals	774	1277

Source: AISD Student Discipline Records

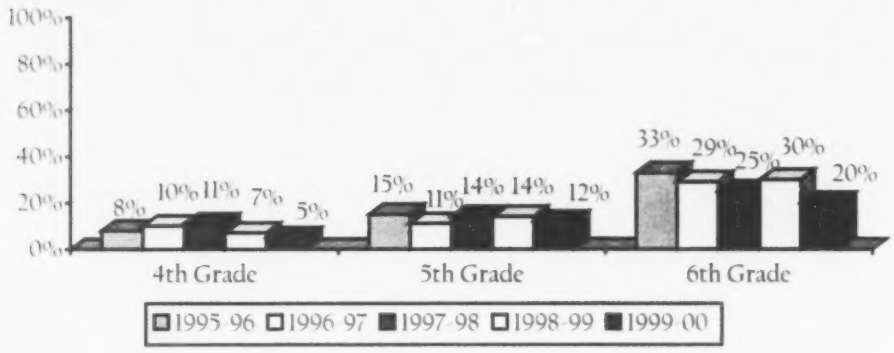
TEXAS SCHOOL SURVEY OF DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE

Elementary Substance Use

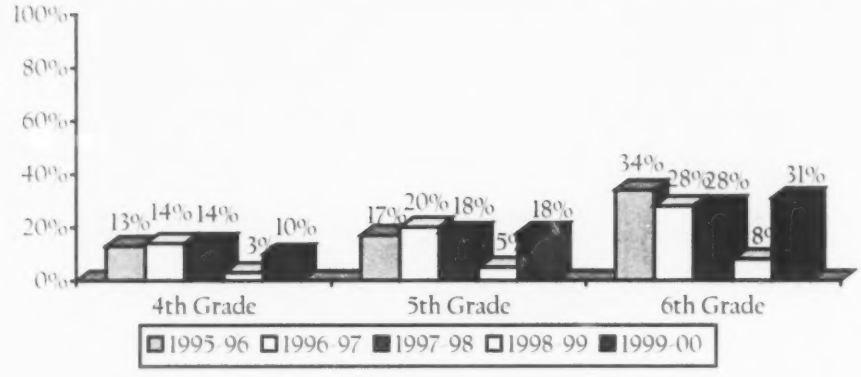
Percentage of AISD Elementary Students Reporting Recent (Past Year) Tobacco Use



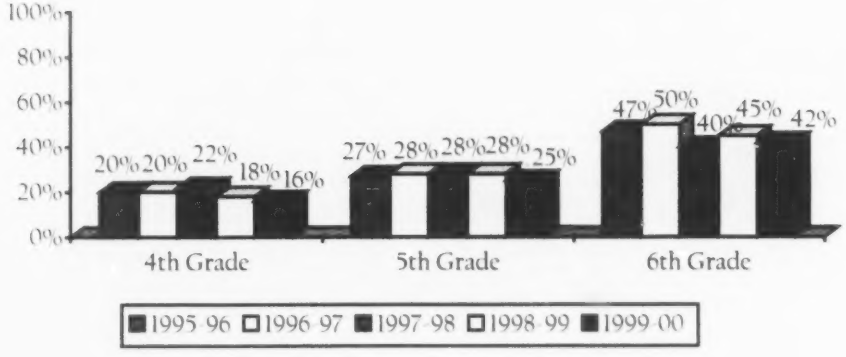
Percentage of AISD Elementary Students Reporting Ever Used Tobacco



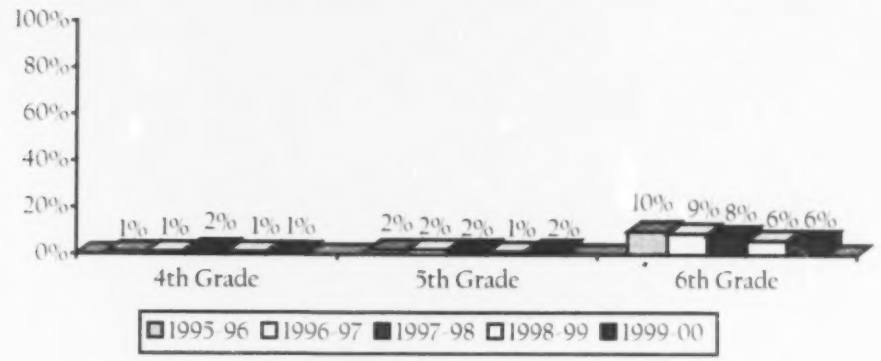
Percentage of AISD Elementary Students Reporting Recent (Past Year) Alcohol Use



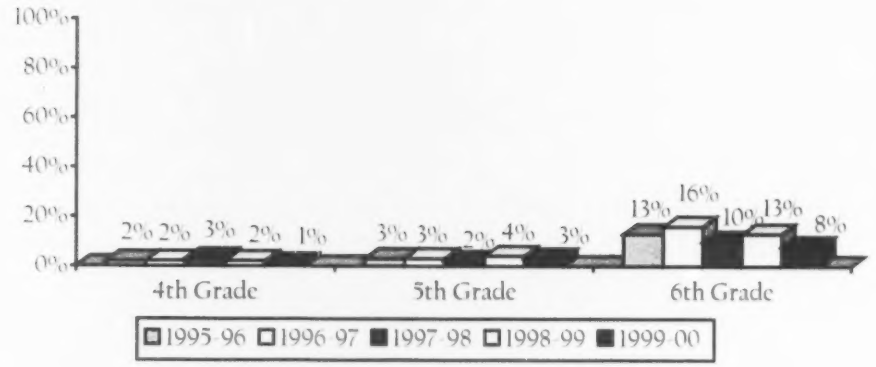
Percentage of AISD Elementary Students Reporting Ever Used Alcohol



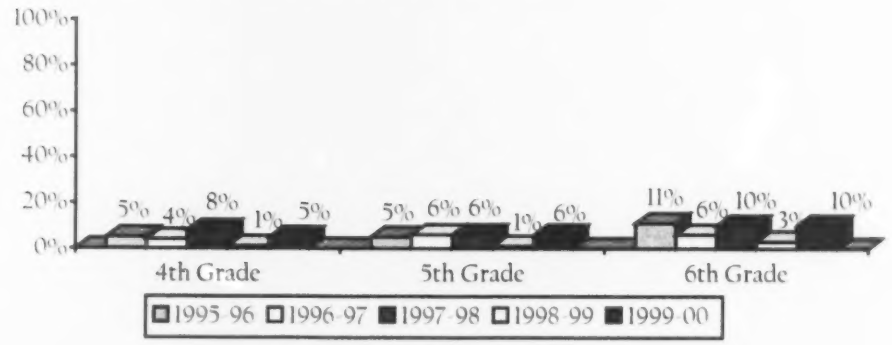
Percentage of AISD Elementary Students Reporting Recent (Past Year) Marijuana Use



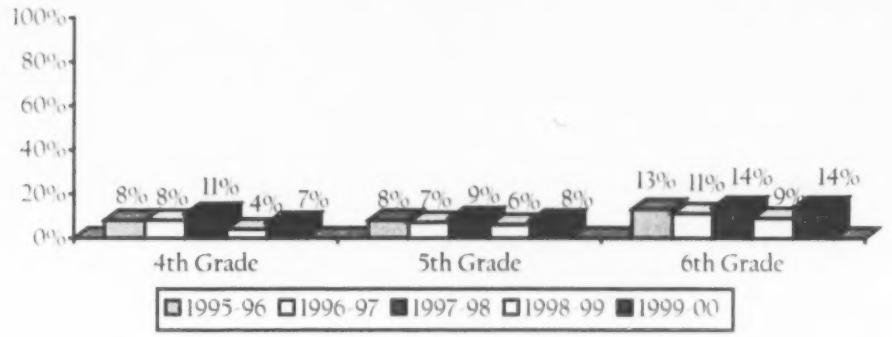
Percentage of AISD Elementary Students Reporting Ever Used Marijuana



Percentage of AISD Elementary Students Reporting Recent (Past Year) Inhalant Use

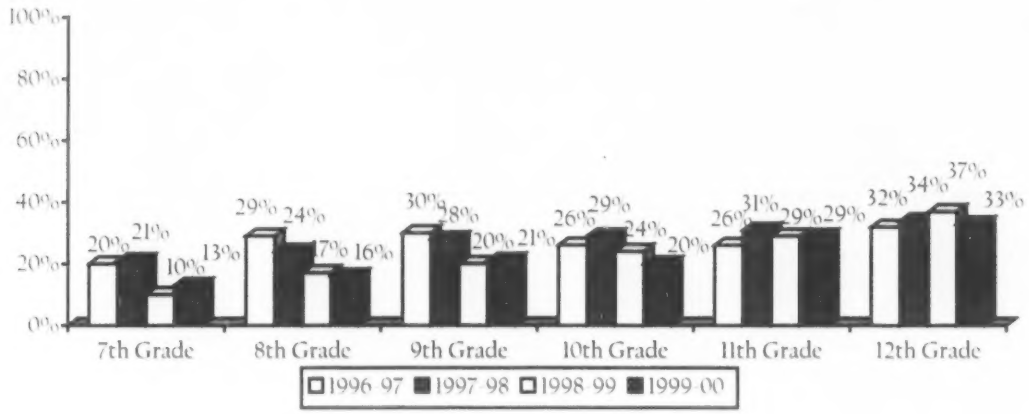


Percentage of AISD Elementary Students Reporting Ever Used Inhalants

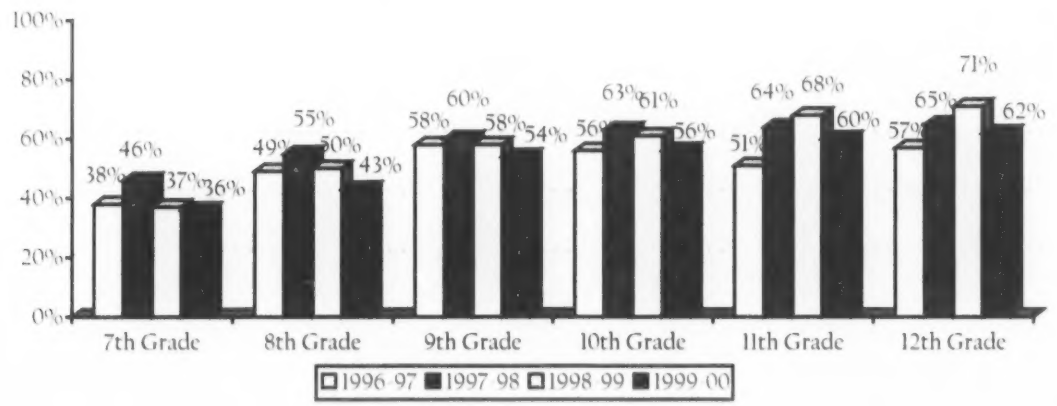


Secondary Substance Use

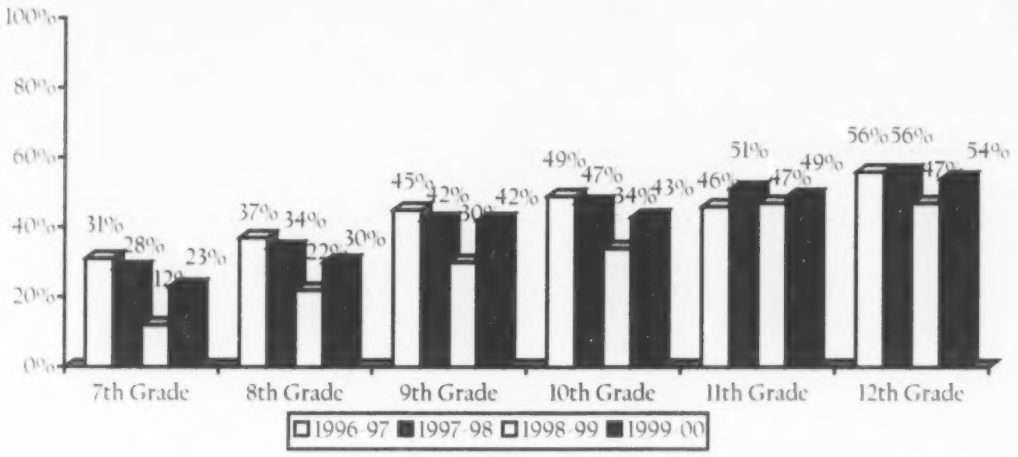
Percentage of AISD Secondary Students Reporting Recent (Past Month) Tobacco Use



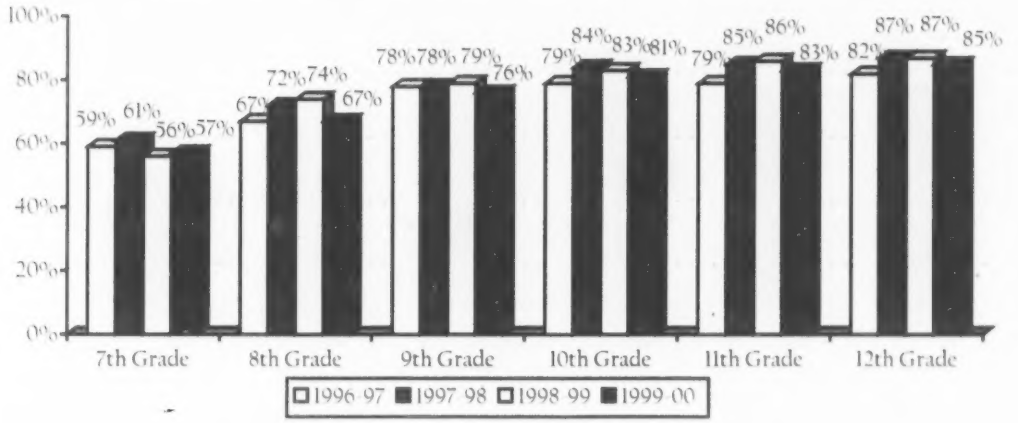
Percentage of AISD Secondary Students Reporting Ever Used Tobacco



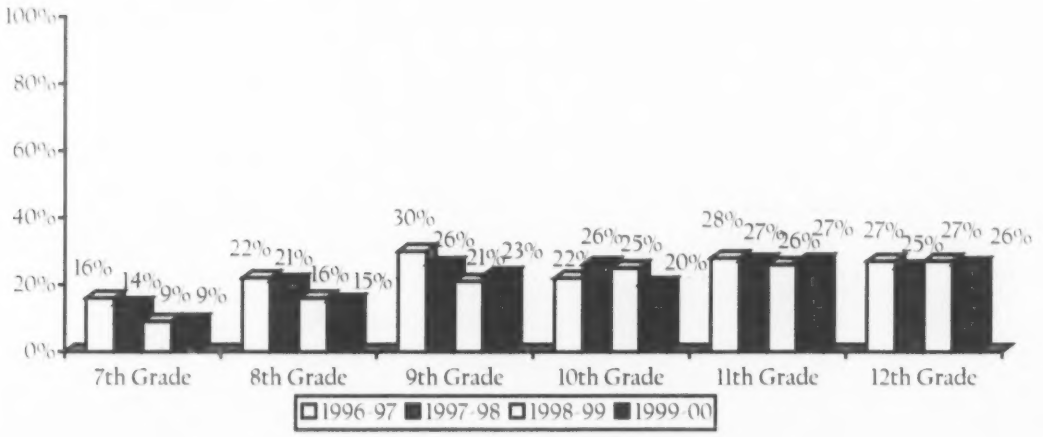
Percentage of AISD Secondary Students Reporting Recent (Past Month) Alcohol Use



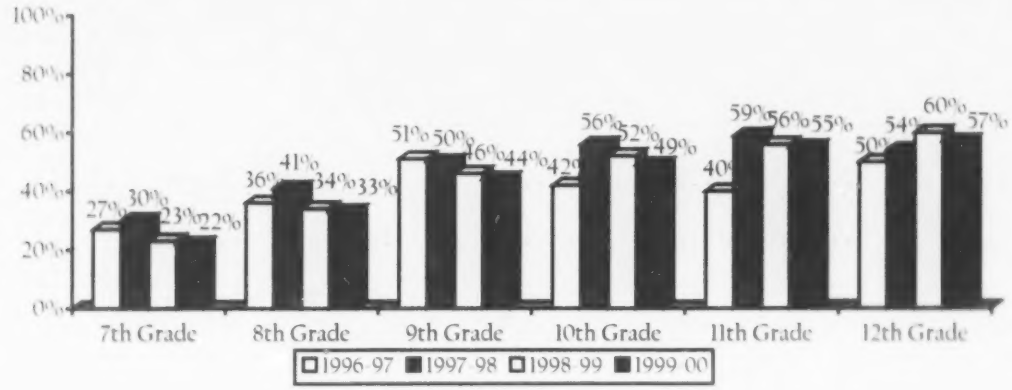
Percentage of AISD Secondary Students Reporting Ever Used Alcohol



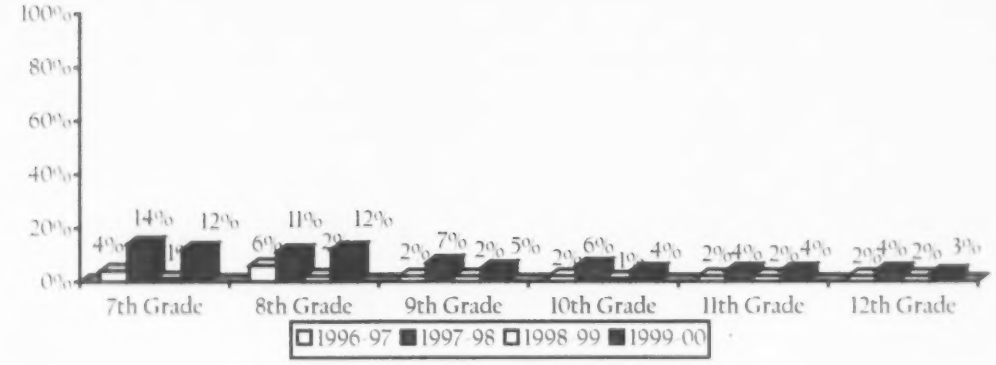
Percentage of AISD Secondary Students Reporting Recent (Past Month) Marijuana Use



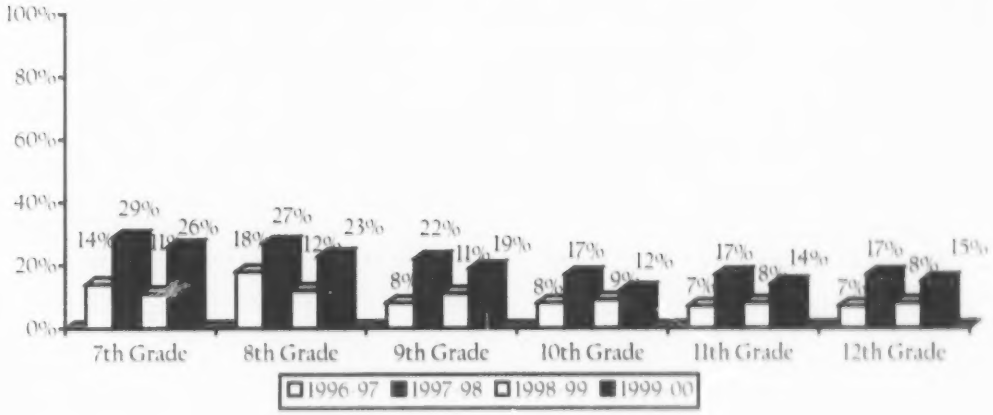
Percentage of AISD Secondary Students Reporting Ever Used Marijuana



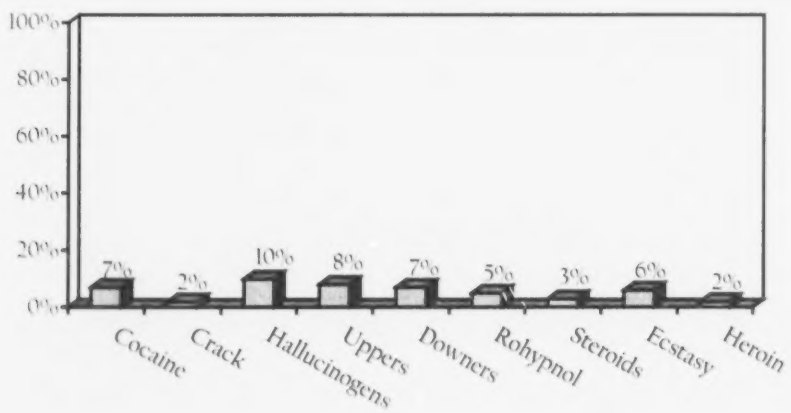
Percentage of AISD Secondary Students Reporting Recent (Past Month) Inhalant Use



Percentage of AISD Secondary Students Reporting Ever Used Inhalants



Percentage of AISD Secondary Students (Grades 7-12) Reporting Ever Used Other Illegal Substances, 2000



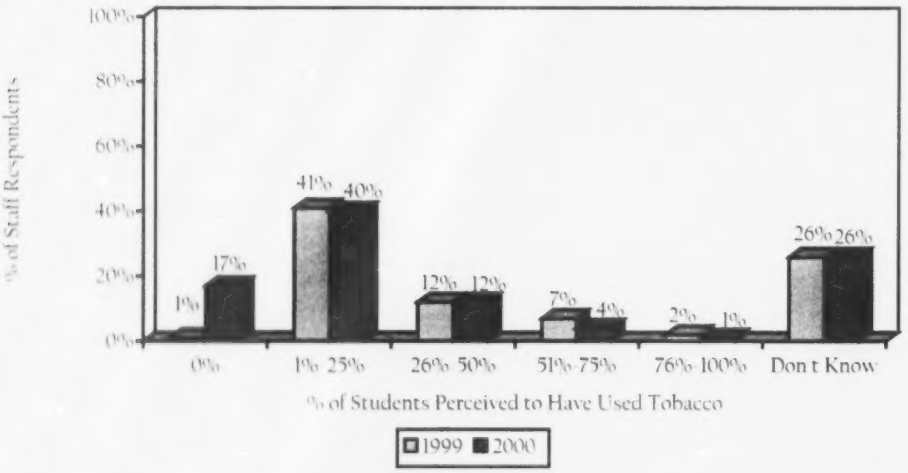
EMPLOYEE COORDINATED SURVEY

Staff Perceptions of Substance Use

A sample of elementary and secondary school staff members were asked to estimate approximately what percentage of students at their schools used tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana. Results in the following figure are provided for 1999 and 2000 to show any possible trends. When asked to estimate the percentage of students on campus who had ever used tobacco, 40% of respondents in 2000 indicated that between 1% and 25% of their campus student population had used tobacco. Approximately 61% of counselors, 57% of administrators, 37% of teachers, and 20% of classified staff chose this response. Approximately 17% of all staff respondents indicated that they did not think any students at their school used tobacco, and 26% of respondents did not know whether or not students at their school used tobacco. Comparing results from 1999 to 2000, there is not much change in the way staff respondents perceive student tobacco use on their campus with one exception: more staff in 2000 (17%) than in 1999 (1%) did not think that any students on their campus used tobacco.

Results for elementary and secondary teaching staff respondents were reported separately in the 2000 survey. As shown in the following table, most elementary teaching staff respondents perceived that fewer of the students at their schools used tobacco. However, among secondary teaching staff respondents, more seemed to perceive that a relatively higher percentage of students at their schools used tobacco. In addition, more elementary teachers than secondary teachers chose the "don't know" response.

Overall AISD Staff Perception of Students' Tobacco Use, 1999, 2000



Source: AISD Employee Coordinated Survey, 1999, 2000

Percentages of AISD Elementary and Secondary Teaching Staff Perceptions of Student Tobacco Use, 2000

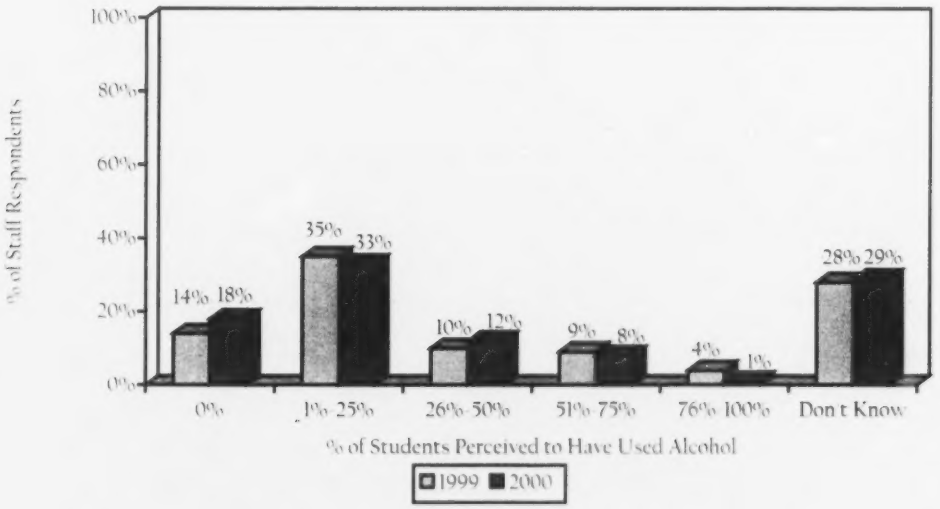
Teacher Respondents	0% Students Use	1%-25% Students Use	26%-50% Students Use	51%-75% Students Use	76%-100% Students Use	Don't Know
Elementary	29	32	3	0	0	36
Secondary	1	43	26	10	2	18

Source: AISD Employee Coordinated Survey, 2000

When asked to estimate the percentage of students on campus who had ever used alcohol, 33% of staff respondents in 2000 indicated that between 1% and 25% of their campus student population had used alcohol. As shown in the following figure, approximately 55% of counselors, 48% of administrators, 28% of teachers, and 17% of classified staff chose this response. Among respondents, 18% thought no students at their school had used alcohol, while 29% indicated that they did not know whether students on their campus had ever used alcohol. Comparing results from 1999 to 2000, there is not much change in the way staff respondents perceive student alcohol use.

As shown in the following table, when elementary and secondary teaching staff respondents were compared, more elementary teachers than secondary teachers perceived that fewer of the students at their schools used alcohol. In addition, more elementary teachers than secondary teachers chose the "don't know" response.

Overall AISD Staff Perception of Students' Alcohol Use, 1999, 2000



Source: AISD Employee Coordinated Survey, 1999, 2000

Percentages of AISD Elementary and Secondary Teaching Staff Perceptions of Student Alcohol Use, 2000

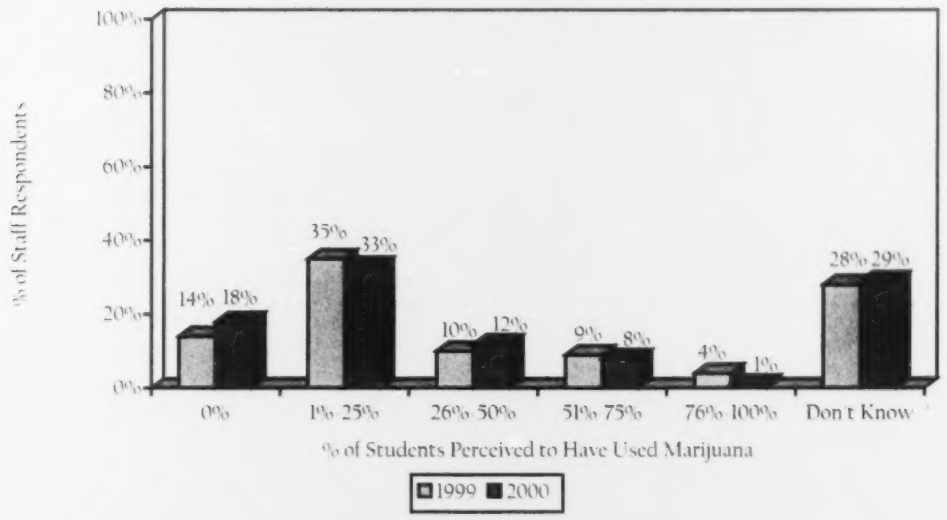
Teacher Respondents	0% Students Use	1%-25% Students Use	26%-50% Students Use	51%-75% Students Use	76%-100% Students Use	Don't Know
Elementary	31	26	2	0	0	41
Secondary	1	31	26	22	2	19

Source: AISD Employee Coordinated Survey, 2000

When asked to estimate the percentage of students on campus who had ever used marijuana, 36% of staff respondents in 2000 indicated that between 1% and 25% of their campus student population had used marijuana. Approximately 56% of counselors, 44% of administrators, 35% of teachers and 18% of classified staff chose this response. Among respondents, 18% thought no students at their campus used marijuana, while 29% indicated that they did not know whether students on their campus had ever used marijuana. Comparing results from 1999 to 2000, there is not much change in the way staff respondents perceive student marijuana use.

Comparing elementary and secondary teacher respondents in the following table, more elementary teachers than secondary teachers perceived that fewer of the students at their schools used marijuana. In addition, more elementary teachers than secondary teachers chose the "don't know" response.

Overall AISD Staff Perception of Students' Marijuana Use, 1999, 2000



Source: AISD Employee Coordinated Survey, 1999, 2000

Percentages of AISD Elementary and Secondary Teaching Staff Perceptions of Student Marijuana Use, 2000

Teacher Respondents	0% Students Use	1%-25% Students Use	26%-50% Students Use	51%-75% Students Use	76%-100% Students Use	Don't Know
Elementary	35	27	0	0	0	38
Secondary	1	45	25	12	1	17

Source: AISD Employee Coordinated Survey, 2000

VIOLENCE IN AISD

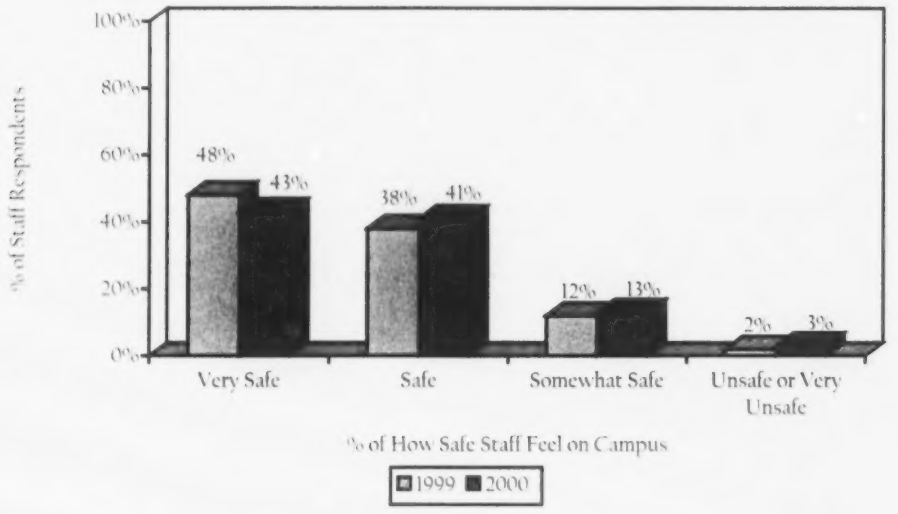
EMPLOYEE COORDINATED SURVEY

Staff Safety

Staff respondents were asked for their opinions on campus safety in several ways. For example, staff respondents were asked to indicate how safe they felt at their school. The majority of respondents indicated that they feel safe (41%) or very safe (43%) on their campuses. This trend continues from 1999 through 2000. There were no differences between staff respondents at elementary or secondary campuses.

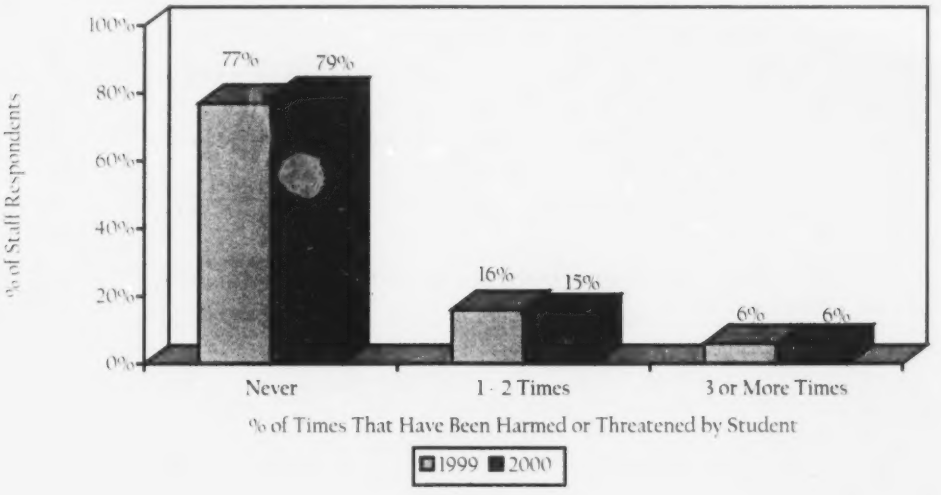
Staff respondents also reported how often they had been harmed or threatened with harm by a student during the current school year. Most staff (79%) responded that they had never been harmed or threatened with harm during 1999-2000, and this was true whether the staff person was from an elementary or secondary campus. Approximately 15% reported being harmed or threatened once or twice, and 6% indicated that they had been harmed or threatened three or more times. The data reflect similar trends in responses from the 1998-99 school year.

AISD Staff Sense of Safety on Campus, 1999, 2000



Source: AISD Employee Coordinated Survey, 1999, 2000

AISD Staff Reports of Being Harmed or Threatened with Harm by a Student, 1999, 2000



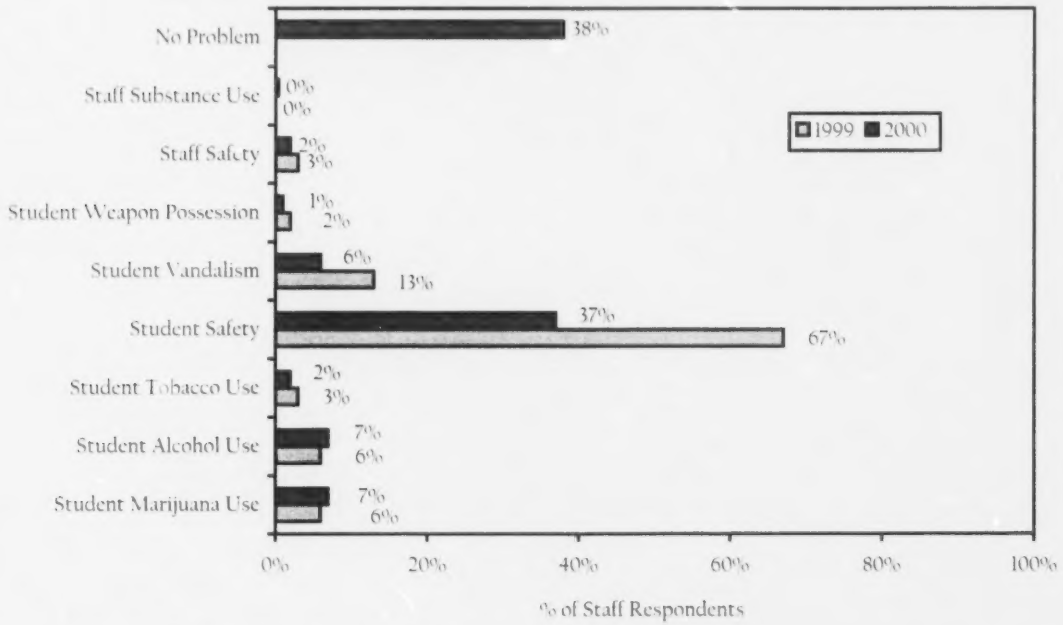
Source: AISD Employee Coordinated Survey, 1999, 2000

The Most Serious Problem on Campus

Staff respondents were asked to choose the most serious problem on their campus from a selected list. Among those responding to the 2000 survey, the most commonly selected problem on campus was student safety issues such as fighting, harassment, and threats. There was no difference between staff respondents at elementary or secondary schools. A similar response trend is found among 1999 survey respondents. However, a higher percentage of 1999 respondents (67%) than 2000 respondents (37%) felt that student safety was the most serious campus problem. Other potential problems listed, such as student substance use, student vandalism,

student weapon possession, staff substance use, and staff safety were not given high problem ratings as often by staff respondents. Approximately 38% of respondents indicated that there were no serious problems on campus in 2000.

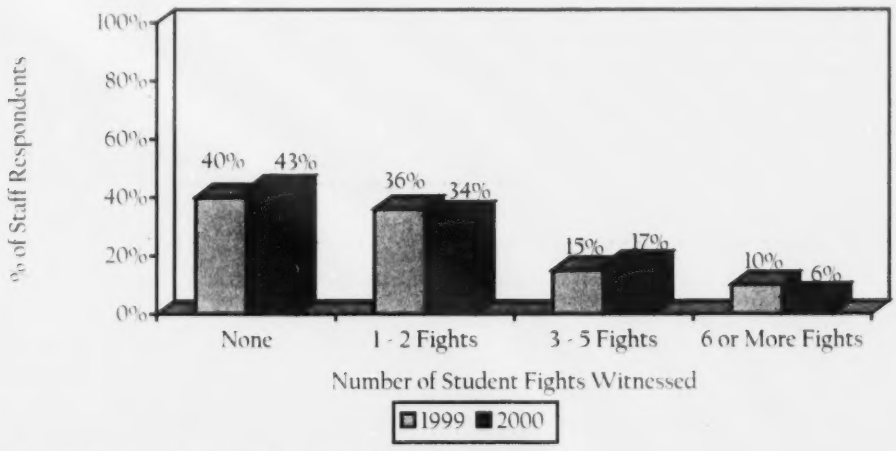
AISD Staff Perception of the Most Serious Campus Problem, 1999, 2000



Source: AISD Employee Coordinated Survey, 1999, 2000

When staff respondents were asked how many student fights they had witnessed during the school year, 43% reported that they had not witnessed any student fights during 1999-2000. However, 34% indicated that they had witnessed one to two fights, 17% reported witnessing three to five fights, and 6% indicated that they had witnessed six or more fights. These trends are similar to those reported by staff in 1998-99.

AISD Staff Reports of Witnessing Student Fights During the School Year, 1999, 2000



Source: AISD Employee Coordinated Survey, 1999, 2000

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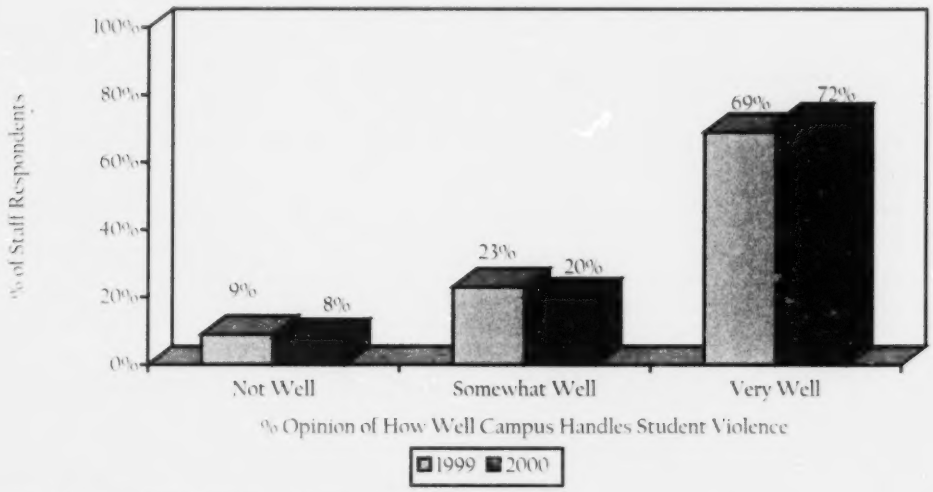
Campus Safety and Discipline Procedures

In the opinion of most staff members (72%), their campus handled student violence very well in 2000, continuing a similar trend in opinion from 1999. Additionally, 20% thought the campus handled it somewhat well, and 8% reported that student violence was not handled well.

AISD Staff Opinion of How Well Their Campus Handles Student Violence, 1999, 2000



Source: AISD Employee Coordinated Survey, 1999, 2000

Staff members also were asked to report to the best of their knowledge whether or not certain required safety and discipline procedures had been implemented at their campus. Results from 1999 and 2000 show that relatively small percentages of staff respondents know that safety and discipline procedures have been implemented on their campuses.

AISD Staff Knowledge of Required Safety and Discipline Procedures Implemented on Campus, 1999, 2000

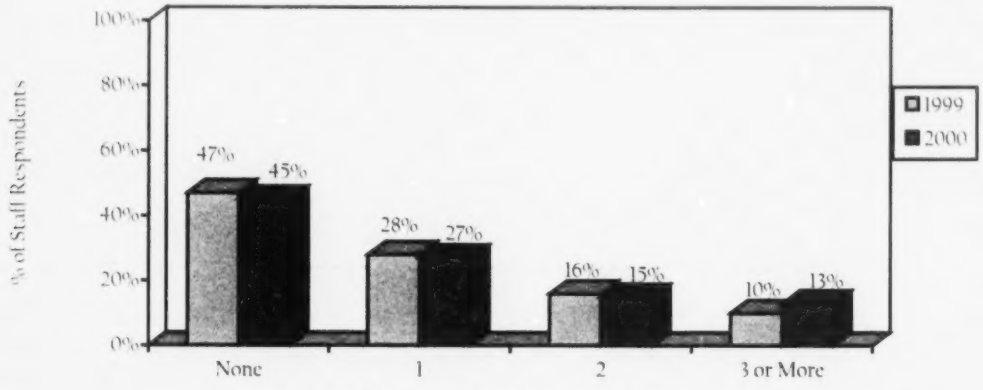
Safety/Discipline Procedure in Place on Campus	% Staff Responses 1998-99	% Staff Responses 1999-2000
• **Crisis Management Plan**	15%	13%
• **Written Discipline Policy Communicated to Students, Staff, and Parents**	19%	15%
• **Discipline Violations Reported to District and Local Law Enforcement**	12%	10%
• **Safety Training and Drills Conducted with Students and Staff**	15%	12%
• **Campus Building/Grounds Safety Checks**	12%	10%
• **Campus Visitor Procedures**	15%	13%
• **Staff Training (e.g., conflict management, crisis prevention, diversity/tolerance, classroom management)**	13%	10%
• **Zero Tolerance of Violence**	NA	9%
• **Zero Tolerance of Drug Use**	NA	9%

Source: AISD Employee Coordinated Survey, 1999, 2000

Staff Training in Drug or Violence Prevention

To gauge AISD staff members' access to training and professional development on the prevention of student substance use and violence, survey respondents were asked to report how many workshops, seminars, and/or conferences that they had attended in the past two years that focused on prevention. In 1999-2000, 45% of campus staff respondents did not attend any prevention training in the past two years. Approximately 27% have attended one such training in the past two years, 15% have attended two, and 13% have attended three or more. These results are similar to those obtained for 1998-99. Comparing the number of training sessions reported by campus staff, a larger percentage of administrators (69%) and counselors (91%) had received some prevention training in the past two years than had teachers (45%) or classified staff (41%).

AISD Campus Staff Prevention Training, 1999, 2000



Source: AISD Employee Coordinated Survey, 1999, 2000

Campus staff respondents also were asked to report the types of prevention training that would be helpful for campus staff to receive. The most commonly requested training sessions reported were as follows: parent/family involvement and communication (23%), conflict resolution (21%), decision making and life skills training (18%), and student risk and resiliency factors (16%). Other requested training was for crisis management (14%) and student substance use (9%).

Perceptions of AISD Campus Staff Training Needs in Prevention, 1999, 2000

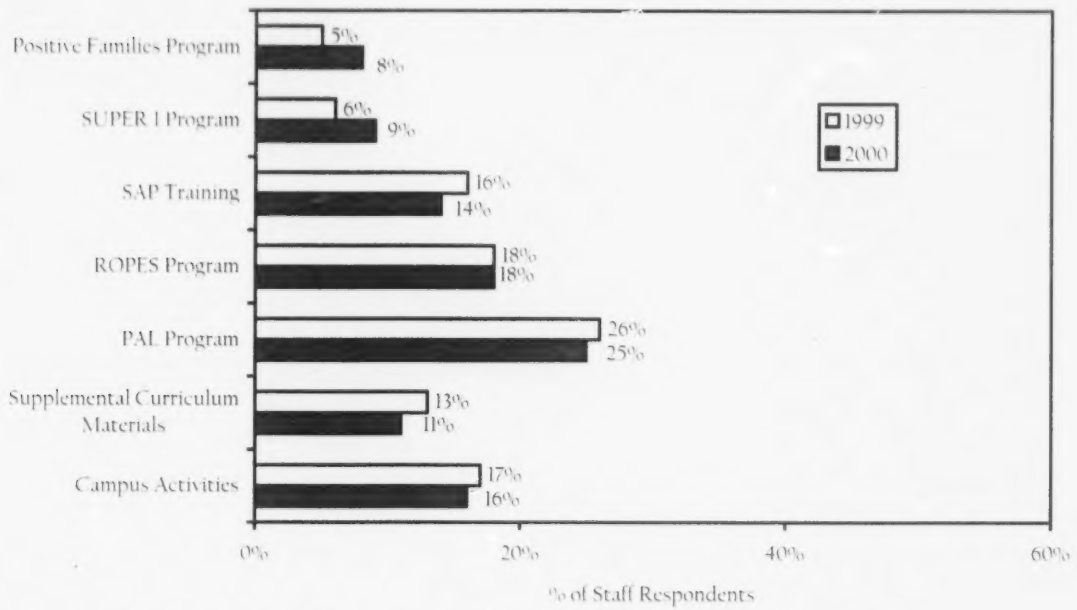
Area of Staff Training Need	% of 1998-99 Respondents	% of 1999-2000 Respondents
• **Parent/Family Involvement or Communication**	22%	23%
• **Conflict Resolution (Alternatives to Violence)**	22%	21%
• **Decision Making, Life Skills Training**	21%	18%
• **Student Risk and Resiliency Factors**	15%	16%
• **Crisis Management**	12%	14%
• **Student Alcohol, Drug, & Tobacco Use**	8%	9%

Source: AISD Employee Coordinated Survey, 1999, 2000

Staff Familiarity with AISD Drug and Violence Prevention Resources

Staff members were asked to indicate their familiarity with a number of district resources and programs aimed at prevention of substance use and violence. For both 1999 and 2000 staff survey respondents, the PAL program was recognized most often by staff, followed by the ROPES program, campus-based prevention activities, and SAP (student assistance program) training. Less well known were supplemental curriculum resources (i.e., *DAVE*), and the SUPER I INVEST and Positive Families programs.

AISD Staff Familiarity With AISD Prevention Resources, 1999, 2000



Source: AISD Employee Coordinated Survey, 1999, 2000

APPENDIX G
ROPES EVALUATION

ROPES STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

Results of the 1999-2000 ROPES student survey (n=712) indicate that student respondents felt the program objectives were achieved, especially in terms of leadership and communication skills. Most students agreed that they gained the following leadership and communication skills from ROPES participation:

- Understanding why it helps to plan things out (86%);
- Understanding that good communication includes sharing ideas and listening to others (86%);
- Feeling pride in group's accomplishments (84%);
- Assisting group problem solving (83%);
- Learning there are several choices when faced with a problem (79%).

Over two thirds of students endorsed items related to increased problem solving skills. For instance, 67% of students report that ROPES helped them understand the consequences of their actions, and 66% of students were more willing to ask others for help. Respondents indicated that their interpersonal skills also increased. For example, 64% of students believed that their self-esteem increased, 60% reported that they were better able to get along with peers, and 62% asserted that they had a better understanding of peer pressure.

ROPES involvement was reported to have some effect on decision-making skills about alcohol and other drugs. More than half of students (59%) stated that they learned about the risks of using alcohol and other drugs, that ROPES would help them think through difficult situations involving drugs and alcohol, and that they did not believe that they would use drugs and alcohol illegally in the future. A less strong endorsement of the relationship between ROPES and drug/alcohol education may be due to program objectives. The ROPES program is intended to provide protective factors against drug/alcohol use rather than direct drug education.

ROPES STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

Staff members who accompanied students to the ROPES course (n=42) during 1999-2000 assessed the success of reaching program objectives. Survey results indicated that staff respondents felt that ROPES program objectives were met for leadership skills, decision-making, and conflict resolution. The majority of staff respondents endorsed the following benefits for students:

- Gain in knowledge of leadership potential (95%);
- Increase in positive interactions among student participants (88%);
- Increase in students' self-confidence (86%);
- Increase in positive interactions with teachers (76%);
- Greater ability to make responsible choices (74%);
- Greater understanding of the negative consequences of using alcohol/drugs (55%).

Almost all staff agreed that they themselves and students benefited from ROPES and that ROPES is a good use of district resources. However, only 57% of teaching staff felt that the first meeting for orientation (Phase I) was beneficial to their role as a facilitator for Phase IV, and even

fewer (31%) agreed that the Phase IV follow up session was effective in reinforcing the ROPES program. The orientation phase (I) of the ROPES program is an essential development piece, which emphasizes safety on the ROPES course. Phase IV programming, in which only five schools elected to participate during 1999-2000, is now taught by school staff.

ROPES ADULT SURVEY RESULTS

A small group of other adults (n=11) from the community attended the ROPES course during 1999-2000. The results of their survey indicated that these participants felt the ROPES workshop was beneficial. All participants agreed that the workshop was a good use of their time and the students' time and district resources. Furthermore, 82% (n=9) of participants gave the workshop an "A" grade. All respondents agreed that students who participated gained knowledge of their leadership potential, and 64% (n=7) believed that ROPES participation helped students in resisting drug or alcohol abuse.

ROPES FACILITATOR TRAINING PROJECT - SURVEY RESULTS

AISD staff was trained in ROPES facilitation for the first time in 1999-2000 in order to provide a greater number of ROPES staff facilitators to serve more students. In an effort to assess the success of the facilitator training, participating teachers (n=11) and other staff (n=4) were surveyed separately in order to address differential skill sets acquired. A goal of the ROPES facilitator training project was to help staff generalize skills learned during ROPES to the classroom or administration. Teachers were asked to state whether or not certain aspects of their own leadership were greatly affected by the ROPES Facilitator Training Program. The following results summarize teachers' skills positively affected by ROPES participation:

- Approach to teaching usefulness of problem solving (91%);
- Classroom facilitation (82%);
- Trust and cohesion in the classroom (73%);
- Working relationships with staff and faculty (73%);
- Perception of self (73%);
- Ability to work through fears (64%);
- Ability to create a safe environment for students (64%);
- Listening and Observation in the classroom (64%);
- Communication skills (64%);
- Understanding of teaching and learning (55%);
- Teaching skills (46%).

Other staff respondents reported that ROPES had a positive impact on the following:

- Ability to work through fear (100%);
- Facilitation skills (75%);
- Listening and observation skills (75%);
- Approach to problem solving (75%);
- Leadership skills at school (75%);
- Communication skills (75%);
- Understanding of teaching and learning (75%);
- Working relationships with staff and faculty (50%);
- Counseling skills (50%);
- Perception of self (25%).

ROPES Family/Mentor Program- Parent/Mentor and Youth Survey Results

Youth Survey

Another new ROPES program during 1999-2000 was the Family/Mentor program that was created for enhanced interpersonal bonding between mentors/parents and their mentees/children. Results from a survey of mentees and children of the parents involved (n=23) show the following gains endorsed by the youth participants:

- Learning that there are several choices when faced with a problem (91%);
- Feeling proud of group accomplishments (91%);
- Understanding why it helps to plan things out (87%);
- Seeing that good communication includes sharing ideas and listening (87%);
- Helping group problem solving (87%);
- Understanding the consequences of actions (74%).

Youth also reported the following that were impacted by ROPES to a lesser degree:

- Better understanding of peer pressure (39%);
- Feeling it would be easier to talk to parent/mentor (35%);
- Being more likely to talk to parent/mentor about drugs and alcohol (35%);
- Getting along better with parent/mentor (30%);
- Learning to trust parent/mentor more (30%).

ROPES youth participants also were given an opportunity to write about the experience. Specifically, youth were asked to write about increases in self knowledge and knowledge about their parent/mentor. The following results reflect a summarization of the narrative responses:

Self knowledge

Many students discussed being surprised by their abilities. They explained that by putting some effort into problem solving they were able to be successful. Students reported newfound bravery, trust, and self-esteem. "I am stronger, braver, and cooler than I had thought," one participant stated. Some youth participants felt empowered by having their opinions count. These students reported being more confident about speaking up in a group. "I could be a leader and not a loser," another student said. Other students commented on the realization that it is necessary to help others. Finally, several participants gained more understanding of their limitations and fears.

Knowledge About Parents/Mentors

Students also commented on the discovery of their parent's/mentor's abilities and willingness to try new things. Youth participants reported gaining more trust in the parents/mentors and discussed the necessity of communicating with these adults. Teamwork among youth and adults was highlighted, and several students reported learning that they were able to work well with their parent/mentor. Additionally, some students discussed feeling respected by their parent/mentor.

Parent/Mentor Survey

Family members and mentors (n=41) completed a survey, and results indicated overall positive responses:

- The program's training rated an "A" grade (99%);
- Future decision-making would be affected (88%);

- Listening, observation, problem solving and communication skills had been affected (83%);
- Level of trust between parent/mentor and child/mentee had improved (78%);
- Parent/child and mentor/mentee relationship had been affected by participation (76%);
- Youth participants gained knowledge of their leadership potential (71%);
- Parent/mentor more likely to be accepting of their child/mentee (71%);
- Trust between parent/mentor and child/mentee had improved (63%);
- Parent/mentor more likely to talk to their child/mentee about decisions concerning drugs and alcohol (59%).

In the survey, parents and mentors had the opportunity to express the gains from ROPES that they viewed as most important. The narrative results were summarized as follows:

Personal Growth

Respondents reported that they gained more faith in their abilities. Courage and strength were emphasized. One participant stated, "I learned something very important about myself, that I can overcome fear and go forward." In general, the ROPES experience was found to be personally challenging. Another person reflected that the program established a great balance between the need to stretch and the ability to set your own goals.

Interpersonal Growth

Many commented on a gain in perspective. Parents/mentors reported that they were able to see qualities in their children/mentees that were previously hidden or overlooked. One respondent explained, "It's fabulous for our families to be together and see each other positively in different circumstances." Parents/mentors reported that they saw the youth participants differently as a result of the ROPES training. There was increased trust and respect. Parents/mentors were able to acknowledge the youths' strength, courage, self-knowledge, confidence, team planning abilities, and maturity.

Group-oriented Growth

Skills related to effective teamwork were addressed. Participants noticed increased cooperation and leadership. Several parents/mentors were surprised to see the leadership potential of certain youth. One respondent stated, "What a team building experience!"

Quality Instruction

Parent/mentor participants in the ROPES program stated they were impressed with the overall quality of the training instruction. The training was described as being very supportive, fun, friendly, safe, thorough, well organized, informative, and useful. One participant explained, "It (ROPES) presents information about leadership and cooperation in a hands-on, novel, and memorable manner; it will stay with us for a long time." Another respondent stated, "You guys are pros, and you gave the group just the right push."

ROPES Focus Group Results

ROPES students and several staff members (n=16) participated in a focus group discussion and survey. Focus group participants were asked to state whether or not certain student traits and skills were affected as a result of ROPES participation. The following traits/skills were those the group thought were most impacted by ROPES:

- Problem solving (100%);
- Trust (100%);
- Communication (88%);
- Confrontation of fears (88%);
- Leadership (81%);
- Learning (81%);
- Self-esteem (69%);
- Listening (69%);
- Perceptions (69%)
- Observing (63%).

Thus, the overall responses from the focus group indicated benefits for participants across many traits and skills with communication and trust impacted most.

The ROPES focus group also included an opportunity for participants to cite those aspects of the program that they saw as most effective. A summary of these views is as follows:

- Success of working as a group;
- People appeared to "blossom";
- Participants listened to others more;
- ROPES is an effective way to reinforce learning; it's a bridge to teachers to fill the learning gap;
- The undivided attention that students get is beneficial;
- ROPES prompts teachers to think about whether or not they can create a similar environment in the classroom;
- Students see adults differently as a result of ROPES; rather than viewing them as just an authority figure, they engage in a non-adversarial manner;
- "It was really fun";
- "We learned to work with each other".

ROPES Course Goals, Activities, Objectives, and Processing Examples

Goal and Activity	Objective	Processing Examples
Goal: Students will get acquainted with each other. **Activity**: Elbow Tag is a fun and simple tag game that is played in pairs.	*To help students learn the names of other group members. *To help younger students lower resistance of working with the opposite sex. *To help students open up and relax.	"Was it OK that girls were partnered with boys, and boys with girls at the start of this game?" "Who is willing to try saying everyone's name in the group?"
Goal: Students will understand peer pressure. **Activity**: Chocolate River is a game where students must pull together to defeat the tricky "sharks" (facilitators).	*To give students an experience of peer pressure. *To help students understand the difficulty in making decisions while being pressured about using drugs and alcohol. *To help students know what tools and resources are available to help them stand up to peer pressure.	"What did the "sharks" do to try to defeat you?" "What did your group do to defeat the "sharks"? "Who or what are the "sharks" in your life?" "How do they try to get you to use drugs?" "How can you not be a "shark" victim?"
Goal: Students will increase their trust of each other. **Activity**: The Trust Fall activity involves a student falling back into the arms of his/her teammates.	*To provide an emotionally safe environment for the students. *To give students opportunities to be trustworthy. *To help students understand the value and delicate nature of trust between people. *To teach students the importance of being able to trust their friends.	"What was the most difficult part for you?" "If you lose someone's trust, how hard is it to earn it back?" "Describe what is was like for you to be a catcher."
Goal: Students will improve their planning skills. **Activity**: The Space Shuttle activity requires the group to transport themselves from Earth to the Moon through the (No Talking) Black Hole.	*To help students understand the benefits of planning ahead. *To illustrate the need for everyone in the group to know the plan. *To help students make a plan for future situations where they may be faced with drug & alcohol use decisions.	"What was your plan for the Black Hole at the beginning?" "Do you need to stop and plan further?" "What could your team have done to be more successful?" "What kind of plan can you make for yourself to avoid tough on the spot drug and alcohol use decisions?"
Goal: Students will understand that all actions have consequences. **Activity**: During Maui to Wowi, also called "Islands", the group must cross from one island (4X4 wooden box) to another island using their only resource, wooden planks. These three boards must be used to construct a bridge spanning a distance of six feet.	*To allow students to experience the consequences of their actions. *To encourage students to think before taking action. *To help students transfer their learning of consequences to possible consequences of using drugs and alcohol.	"What was the consequence of someone stepping off the island?" "What happened during your planning session?" "If you use drugs or alcohol, what are some of the possible consequences?"

Goal and Activity	Objective	Processing Examples
Goal: Students will improve their communication and problem solving skills. **Activity**: During the Spider Web challenge, the entire group must pass through a "spider web" without touching the web and awakening the spiders. Since the web is six feet tall, students must team up to lift some of their teammates through the higher openings.	*To challenge students with problems that require group solutions. *To encourage students to solve these challenges through respectful communication. *To help students understand the importance of clear and concise communications. *To help students understand that using drugs or alcohol is not an answer to their problems.	"What was required for the group to solve this challenge?" "Did everyone know the plan before you started? Why or why not?" "Did anyone have a suggestion that was not heard?" "What are some techniques that you could have used to be heard?" "Do drugs or alcohol solve anyone's problems? Why or why not?"
Goal: Students will develop their leadership skills. **Activity**: The Wall challenges the group to get everyone up and over the 8-, 10- or 12-foot wooden wall without using ropes or ladders.	*To encourage students to speak up and share ideas. *To ask students to examine their definition of leadership. *To help students see themselves as leaders. *To help students realize that they may be leaders for others, such as their younger brothers and sisters, and that the drug use decisions they make may be followed by others.	"Who took a leadership role during this activity?" "What does a leader do while leading?" "How can everyone be a leader?" "Who looks up to you?"
Goal: Students will improve their self-esteem. **Activity**: The Lava Pit activity challenges students to cross an imaginary lava pit while swinging on a rope.	*To encourage students to take safe risks. *To help students realize that they can accomplish things that may seem impossible at first. *To allow only the students (not the adults with them) to solve the challenges.	"Did you do anything during this activity that surprised you about yourself?" "How did you personally help the group accomplish this challenge?" "Who solved this challenge, the students or the adults? What does that tell you about yourself?"
Goal: Students will face their fears. **Activity**: The Cat Walk, a High ROPES element, consists of a telephone pole log connected horizontally to two other similar logs 30 feet above ground. The students are wearing a helmet and safety harness, and they are attached to a rope and pulley. The students are challenged to walk across the horizontal pole, cross their partner in the middle, and then be lowered down.	*To encourage students to feel the fear, know they are safe and to take one more step forward. *To help students understand that fear will stop them if they let it. *To allow students to set their goal for how high they want to climb.	"What was the most difficult part for you and how did you get through it?" "What was your climbing goal? Did you achieve it? How do you feel about it?" "Do you have fears in your life that stop you from moving forward in a positive way?" "How can you use what you learned about yourself today to help you back at school or in your life?"

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APPENDIX H
PAL EVALUATION

PAL/PALEE ACTIVITY REPORT

PAL students kept a journal and completed activity reports every six weeks. These six-week reports, analyzed as part of the program evaluation, provided information on the type and frequency of topics discussed by PALs and PALees during their meetings. However, a few schools did not return all of the students' six-weeks activity reports. Therefore, findings presented in this report represent most but not all schools that participated.

An analysis was completed on the content of PAL/PALees discussions and the approximate percentage of time that these topics were discussed during meetings in 1999-2000. More than one topic could be addressed during the PAL/PALee meetings. The most commonly discussed topics were self-concept (80%), relationships with peers, family, and teachers (78%), substance abuse (76%), and decisions and behavior (75%). To a lesser degree, discussions or activities addressed the importance of staying in school (32%) and tutoring (15%).

PAL AND PALEE SURVEYS

In the spring of 2000, both PAL and PALee students and their teachers were surveyed in order to measure the perceived effectiveness of the PAL program. PAL and PALee students responded to questions about their own subjective experience as a PAL or PALee while these same students also described their respective PAL's or PALee's experience. PAL and PALee teachers were asked to report their opinions on PAL and PALee student progress across the same variables. Providing several perspectives on the PAL and PALee experience allowed for a balanced measure of student progress in the eyes of students and staff. The results of those surveys collected are summarized below.

PAL Surveys

A total of 337 PAL students completed a PAL survey. In general, PALs indicated that the PAL program was beneficial for PALees. PALs noted the following benefits for PALees:

- Know the importance of avoiding alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (92%);
- Better able to take responsibility for their actions (74%);
- Increased self-esteem (71%);
- Better able to handle conflict with peers (71%);
- Better able to ask for help (69%);
- Able to make better decisions (64%);
- Able to have more positive relationships with peers (59%);
- Better able to handle conflict with teachers (51%).

The results of the PAL survey also indicated an overall positive impact for the PAL. Similar to PALee effects, knowledge about the importance of avoiding drugs and alcohol was impacted most. The following results summarize reported PAL benefits of program participation for the PALs:

- Gained more knowledge about the importance of avoiding alcohol, tobacco, and drugs (87%);
- Better able to handle conflict with peers (78%);
- Take responsibility for actions more often (76%);

- Better able to ask for help (72%);
- Improved positive relationships with others (67%);
- Better able to handle conflict with teachers (67%);
- Better able to handle conflict with family members (66%);
- Doing better in school (60%);
- Able to make better decisions (59%);
- Increased self-esteem (57%);
- Improved grades (53%);
- Increased involvement in school events (51%).

PALee Survey

The PALee survey, completed by 350 PALees, addressed potential benefits of the PAL program for the PALee, and asked respondents to describe the PALee's view of their PAL. Results indicated that the PAL program had a positive impact on PALee's attitudes and behaviors. PALees gave the highest rating to learning about the importance of avoiding alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. The following section summarizes all PALee benefits of PAL program participation:

- Learned more about the importance of avoiding alcohol, tobacco, and drugs (91%);
- Improved attendance (89%);
- Stay out of trouble at school (87%);
- Increased self-esteem (81%);
- Better able to ask for help (81%);
- Take responsibility for actions more often (79%);
- Ability to make better decisions (71%);
- Doing better in school (63%);
- Improved positive relationships with other at school (60%);
- Increased involvement in school activities (51%).

PALees also reported favorable perceptions of their PALs. PALs were seen as offering healthy advice and opinions concerning lifestyle. Most PALees agreed that their PALs:

- Were good with people (86%);
- Encouraged good grades (86%);
- Were good role models (84%);
- Enjoyed seeing their PALee (79%);
- Made good decisions and offered help when needed (74%);
- Encouraged participation in school activities (65%);
- Stated the importance of avoiding alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (60%).

PAL Teacher Survey

Thirty-eight teachers completed the PAL teacher survey. PAL teachers rated PALs on the same variables measured in the PAL and PALee surveys. As a whole, PAL teachers reported that the PAL program had a beneficial impact on PAL participants. More than half of PAL teachers surveyed thought that PAL students improved in all aspects of attitude and behavior measured. The strongest improvements observed were in self-esteem (76%), asking for help when needed (76%), and in positive relationships (71%). In addition, improvements were noted in participation in school events (63%), decision making (68%), doing better in school (66%), taking responsibility for actions (66%), and learning how to handle conflict (60%).

Similar to student survey results, PAL teachers reported some program effect on grades: 53% of teachers felt that PALs' grades improved due to the program. However, 29% of PAL teachers were unaware of their students' overall grades.

PAL teachers also provided some narrative feedback on the impact of the PAL program:

- "There is an effect on the PALs not just the PALees!"
- "Increased feelings of pride and self-esteem. Students feel special to know that someone noticed their leadership abilities."
- "PALs learn the role of responsibility and how to think on their own."
- "PALs set an excellent example."
- "PALs learn how to use positive peer pressure."
- Many PALs made remarkable changes: "This PAL went from special education to an honors class"; "He was a non-attending drug user who became a positive role model."

PAL teachers also made the following suggestions about the program in general:

"A teacher evaluation every six weeks would be useful."

- "The loss of class time is regrettable, but students are able to make up their work."
- "The district needs to be more supportive of this program and allow for more participants."
- "PAL teachers need a stipend, or some monetary compensation for time and effort."
- "Keep the program, it works!"

PALee Teacher Survey

The results of 111 PALee teacher surveys indicated an overall positive view of the effect of the PAL program on PALees. PALee teachers reported an increase in the following for PALees:

- Asking for help (75%);
- Self-esteem (70%);
- Taking responsibility for actions (62%);
- Positive relationships (61%);
- Grades (59%);
- Knowing the importance of avoiding alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (57%);
- Handling conflict with others (53%);
- Decision-making (48%);
- Participation in school events (47%).

PALee teachers provided narrative feedback describing the impact of the PAL program on PALees:

- "Students felt very special to have 'one on one attention'; they really looked forward to their PAL visit."
- "Having someone to listen is very important; many students are lonely or have parents who are too busy to take this type of time."
- "PALees can really 'relate' to the PALs well because they are older 'kids', not adults."
- "Some students experienced major changes that seemed to be related to having a PAL. One student who never smiled and hated school now seems to enjoy being here and smiles all the time!"

However, some teachers had PALee students who experienced no change and felt disappointed in the program.

Teachers also made some suggestions about the program in general. Some teachers felt that there was too much missed class time and that PALees enjoyed having a PAL just to get out of class. It was suggested that meetings take place during advisory period or an elective class. Other teachers felt that PALs and PALees should meet more often and for a longer duration. Some teachers suggested having more organized activities. Finally, it was suggested that more students be included in the program. Many teachers mentioned that other students who asked to have a PAL were unable to get one.

PAL Student Focus Groups

PAL student focus groups were used to gather important qualitative data on the PAL program. Three focus groups took place at two middle schools and one high school (n=15, n=25, n=19). Students were asked to rate their traits and skills that were affected by program participation and they also engaged in discussion about the program.

Skills Rating

Students were asked to state if they had witnessed any effect on specific traits and skills as a result of PAL participation. Over two-thirds of all students felt that each trait/skill that the PAL program addresses was affected by PAL participation. The following results indicate those traits and skills impacted the most:

- Listening (97%);
- Communication (92%);
- Observing (86%);
- Problem Solving (86%);
- Leadership (81%);
- Decision Making (81%);
- Learning (78%);
- Trust (73%);
- Self-esteem (73%);
- Perceptions (70%).

Open discussions allowed focus group participants to provide feedback concerning program operation. Five categories of topics resulted from the focus groups: behavioral changes; attitudinal changes; interpersonal skills; rewards; and program appraisal. A summary of comments from the topics follows.

Behavioral Changes

- Students described becoming generally more responsible and mature. This applied to both school and home.
- Students reported higher grades, greater school involvement, better attendance, and increased parental compliance.
- Students stated that they were more likely to take action to help others, rather than talk or think about helping.
- Greater resistance to peer pressure was expressed.
- Students reported that they were more able to overcome challenges.

Attitudinal and Personality Changes

- Students reported having a more positive outlook and feeling happier.
- Increased patience, politeness, honesty, and understanding were described.
- Students believed that they were more friendly and outgoing than they were previously.
- Many students reported increased self-esteem.
- A feeling of empowerment was gained by seeing that a person can make a difference.
- A few students described having a greater array of emotional experience.

Increased Interpersonal Skills

- Communication skills improved. Students were better listeners, and better able to converse with others through the use of such skills as eye contact and introduction.
- Students described increased perception and consideration. They were open to the point of view of others and they understood other's feelings more accurately.
- Anger management was improved and peer mediation skills were acquired.
- Students stated that they now used confidentiality.
- Increased leadership skills and ability to complete successful group work were described.

Rewards Received as a Result of the PAL Experience

- Students stated that they received more respect and compliments from others.
- As a result of greater responsibility, students described receiving more privileges and freedom.
- An increase in friends and a decrease in loneliness were reported.
- Many students described feeling the personal reward of helping others.

PAL Program Appraisal and Recommendations

- Overall, students reported significant beneficial effects of the program.
- PAL is considered by many students to be the most effective program known for mentoring.
- Students reported that skills learned were readily applicable to everyday life.
- The program was considered a unique opportunity.
- Students suggested the need for greater district support and a more uniform program across schools.
- Many participants stated a desire for greater availability of the PAL program. It was suggested that PAL be available to all high school students and more middle school students.
- One student recommended more recognition of the program through press releases.
- More collaborative activities such as service projects were suggested.

PAL Testimonials

In an effort to describe some personal experiences of PAL participants, written testimonials from some high school students (n=22) were reviewed in a content analysis. Similar

to the focus group data, the results of these testimonials could be classified into the same five categories: behavioral changes, attitudinal and personality changes, interpersonal skills, rewards, and program appraisal. Although this information is self-report, the concurrence of qualitative information supports the reported benefits from the PAL program. Students' comments organized in the five qualitative categories are included next.

Behavioral Changes

- "Reaching out instead of just talking has changed my life, and I would not be able to do this if it weren't for PAL."
- "I tell those I care about that they are important not through long letters or lengthy conversations, but by showing and doing."
- "I've had the responsibility of setting an accurate example of what the organization believes in."
- "The lessons that I have learned from those in PAL class will live with me forever. I have learned how to act, and how not to act."
- "I have seen what repercussions people's actions have on their friends. It's like I have stepped into a real life Aesop's Fable."
- "PAL has strengthened my ability to strive for my goals and dreams."
- "I've been taught to listen both through my words and actions."

Attitudinal and Personality Changes

- "The PAL program has been a fundamental component of my education; it has grown and shaped my character."
- "I once was very temperamental, and now I get along with everyone very well."
- "I have not only learned how to understand my PALee, but also myself."
- "I have learned to keep an open mind and an open door to all people."
- "Due to the PAL program I have a firmer grasp on how important love, respect, unity, and consideration are."
- "Sharing with them (PALees) and getting to know them has greatly reinforced the idea of not judging others based on appearance or their interests."
- "I have seen firsthand how generosity, compassion, understanding, devotion, and clarity of thinking can change a person's day and help them to see a problem with an entirely new perspective."
- "Working with my PALees has given me a broader perspective as to what is happening in the world around me, even in my own school."
- "I have been able to understand the difference a single individual can make in the lives of the people around them as well as within their community."
- "These pursuits with my PALees and what I have learned from watching them grow have helped make me a more compassionate, diplomatic, and insightful person."
- "It would be an understatement to say that PALs has only changed my life. I have been given great insight into human behavior, mannerisms, and friendships."
- "This program has made me appreciate life more and face a problem rather than running away from it."
- "Other students in PALs have taught me about what I value."

- "I have learned more about myself becoming a stronger leader and a more self-assured young lady."

Increased Interpersonal Skills

- "Not long after my first meeting with each of my PALees did I realize that this was going to teach me more than I had expected. I have learned to listen to others, validate others' feelings, and have an open mind with those that I may disagree with."
- "PAL has helped me in other areas of my life. I have solved many conflicts with my parents through validation and reflective listening and have been a better listener with my friends."
- "It (PAL) has given me a new understanding of other people around me. My eyes have been opened to what other people may be going through and to respect them regardless."
- "PAL has helped me not only with my relationships within PAL, but also with external relationships, whether that includes friends, parents, or others."
- "I had no idea that I would learn so much about relating to all people and about human nature."
- "I gained the ability to talk to people who are different from me, to see them just like anyone else and not stereotypically."
- "I have used my PAL skills with my teachers and students. I handle conflict with my teachers and peers a lot better."
- "Had it not been for PAL, I would have never been more willing to meet people as I do now."
- "It made me realize that people are not what they seem."
- "I have learned to use my communication skills to talk to people in a way that I didn't know existed."

Rewards Received

- "I didn't expect to get much out of this program, but I have. I have made many wonderful friends, touched another person's life and become a better person."
- "I love to hear them (PALees) tell me that they have done good in a test, played a really good game, or just had a good day."
- "I feel appreciated because I know that they listen to me and learn my mistakes."
- "My PAL class has formed a special relationship."
- "I gained a lot of friends that I will never forget."
- "PAL has helped me relieve some of my stress."
- "I realized that I want to go into a career that involves people and children. Without PAL I would not have found that out until I was in college."
- "PAL has made me feel more wanted."
- "I know I will always carry PAL wherever I go and will look at my challenges with the skills that I have learned in PAL."
- "The PAL program is the major reason I have chosen to pursue the study of sociology. My academic goal is to prepare myself to be a warrior in the fight for human justice in our society."

Program Appraisal and Recommendations

- "I know that PAL has been a program that has saved many students from dropping out of school and has been a way to bring our diverse community a little bit closer."
- "What I do know is that I have participated in the most rewarding and beneficial program ever created."
- "I feel that this class is crucial to the social development of the PALee as well as the PAL."
- "It is demanding by nature both emotionally and time-wise, but I have found it to be an extremely worthwhile use of my energy."
- "I believe PAL is one of the most effective programs because it touches the lives of so many people and drastically changes the lives and perspectives of those that are at the core of the program."
- "I wish that I could make everyone a PAL. You become a person that you never dreamed. PAL you have changed my life forever."
- "You can't go wrong with the PAL program. Please don't take it away because it will hurt many people in the school and around the community."
- "Our PAL sponsor and teacher has been teaching this class for a long time and he knows his stuff."
- "This program not only helps kids understand and solve their problems, it also helps them realize their potential."
- "It (PAL) is a win-win-win cycle for the younger student, the older students, and the school district. It is what I enjoy most about PAL."

APPENDIX I
SUPER I-INVEST AND POSITIVE FAMILIES EVALUATION

SUPER I-INVEST AND POSITIVE FAMILIES SURVEY

Some students and parents/adults who participated in SUPER I-INVEST and Positive Families (n=225) completed a program evaluation survey. Though the SUPER I-INVEST and Positive Families programs have slightly different curricula due to different discipline referral needs, all programs focus on the basic tenets of communication, conflict resolution and anger management. Since these programs are essentially the same in outcome goals, the programs were evaluated together in this section. Further, parent and student participant responses for all variables are not statistically different from each other, and are therefore reported in summary.

Fifty one percent of the survey response group was comprised of parents, while 45% of respondents were students. As a group, parents and students reported benefits from program participation. These benefits are reflected in reports of improved communication, anger management, and conflict resolution. The beneficial impact of these alternate education programs for both parents and student participants are reported as follows:

- Improvement in expressing and controlling anger (97%);
- Improvement in families' ability to solve problems (96%);
- Better understanding of how the family communicates (92%);
- Better understanding of how to achieve conflict resolution (82%);
- Communication skills learned in the programs will generalize to school and work relationships (78%).

PHONE INTERVIEWS

In an effort to obtain more extensive program feedback on SUPER I-INVEST and Positive Families, telephone interviews were conducted with eight parents and three students who participated in these programs. Since SUPER I-INVEST and Positive Families share the same outcome goals, the programs are evaluated together. However, parent and student responses are evaluated separately in order to provide comparison.

Of the twelve parents who were selected by program staff to participate in telephone interviews, nine could be reached. One of these parents declined participation in the evaluation. Of the remaining eight participants, all gave permission to include their children in the study, though only three of these children were available for interviewing. Attempts were made on eight separate occasions during different times of the day and evening to contact all persons selected for interviewing. All participants were asked to assist in program evaluation in order to make program improvements, and all identifying information was guaranteed to be anonymous.

Parent Interviews

The parent phone interviews revealed an overall positive gain from the programs. All parents interviewed felt that they and/or their children benefited from participation. There were six main themes of discussion generated from the interviews: resistant then participant, support, deterrence, seeking more assistance, understanding other's point of view, and openness.

Resistant Then Participant

Some program participants were initially resistant to participate, but discovered that they enjoyed the program and profited from being involved. One parent feared being judged by school staff as a result of a prior exchange with some school personnel, but pleasantly found the instructors and the program to be non-judgmental and open to participants' views.

Support

Participants voiced that they gained much from hearing other parents and students relate similar experiences. Parents said that they no longer felt as if they were the only parents struggling with serious issues concerning their children, and thus gained relief and encouragement to succeed.

Deterrence

Many parents felt that being placed in the group made it clear that there are serious consequences for poor choices. Parents stated that participation in discussion about poor choices, the strict atmosphere of ALC, and having to endure the extra evening program after a full day of classes motivated their children not to offend again.

Seeking More Assistance

Some participants sought out additional means of resolving problems after participation in the program. Scheduled family meetings, family counseling, and participation in the "Tough Love" program are examples of further assistance sought in the community.

Point of View

Several participants voiced that they and others were able to gain a perspective on how others felt as a consequence of the program. Parents stated that they were able to understand how their children perceived issues and vice versa.

Openness

Many parents felt that program involvement helped their children to open up and communicate more. This is a salient point for those teenagers who were seen as progressively communicating less with parents prior to program participation.

Student Interviews

The three youth participants who could be contacted provided feedback on the Positive Families and INVEST programs. As a group, responses to the programs were mixed. This response pattern is different from the parent group who had a consensus in terms of positive appraisal. However, the small number of respondents may have influenced these findings.

One student stated that nothing was gained from the program except the ability to handle conflict better. The remaining two participants had a more favorable appraisal of Positive Families and INVEST. Gains in communication, conflict resolution and anger management were reported for students and parents. These two students also recommended extending the program to more family members and students. That is, a student's entire family could attend sessions, and all students who receive a discipline referral could attend Positive

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Families or INVEST. One student felt that program participation helped both student and parent gain a perspective on how the other felt and thought.

PROGRAM MANAGER AND STAFF INTERVIEWS

SUPER I-INVEST

In a year-end program manager and staff interview, the staff noted the increase from last school year in enrollment in the SUPER I-INVEST program during 1999-2000. Few problems were noted in the program, even with the switch over from SUPER I to INVEST curriculum. One staff member credited the success of the program to its interactive rather than lecture format. Another staff member said that some parents would request follow up sessions with the facilitator because the four class sessions often were just the beginning for the family in their problem-solving process. The program staff considered whether ALC had the capacity to provide follow up sessions upon request from families in the next school year, budget and staff time allowing. Some other considerations proposed for the next school year included the following improvements for INVEST:

- Have a program coordinator or lead facilitator in charge of all class scheduling and monitoring payroll for instructors, record keeping, attendance, and provision of instruction materials and supplies.
- Follow up with students and families after program completion to assess progress and adjustment. Some of this could involve evaluation and data collection using student records, interviews and focus groups as well as the initiation of support groups for students and/or families upon request.

Positive Families

In a year-end program manager and staff interview, the continued low enrollment in the Positive Families program was reviewed. The staff indicated that low use of the program resulted from the program not being mandated or marketed to the schools as a removal option for middle and high school student offenders. The staff affirmed that the program content is good, and that participants gain from being in the program. One staff member indicated that some campuses just did not want to offer the program as an option for shortened removal because the campus staff wanted the student off the home campus for the usual longer six-week period. The program staff also observed that some schools would assign students to the Positive Families program but not to the ALC, and this remains an option for schools.

Future recommendations made by program staff to improve the Positive Families program included the following:

- Make Positive Families a mandated short-term removal option for a specific type of discipline offense (e.g., persistent disruption or fighting).
- Develop a checklist of risk factors for campuses to use in recommending students to attend Positive Families.
- Compare campuses on their discipline removals (rates, reasons for removal) and their rate of participation in Positive Families. Then target campuses with high removals to encourage increased participation in Positive Families.

- As recommended for INVEST, have a program coordinator or lead facilitator in charge of all class scheduling and monitoring payroll for instructors, record keeping, attendance, and provision of instruction materials and supplies.

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